VICTORY SPORTS SERIES

Inside Wrestling

THE MAGAZINE THAT RIPS THE LID OFF PRO WRESTLING

October 1977
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Andre & Strongbow:
ONLY THEIR GREATNESS CAN CONQUER THE DEMONS

DUSTY RHODES: "I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO PROVE!"

SHOULD WE APOLOGIZE TO BLACKJACK MULLIGAN?

SOMEONE PLEASE SAVE JACK BRISCO'S CAREER

Our Exclusive Investigation Reveals... IVAN PUTSKI IS GETTING THE SHAFT!

Now Even Bruno Predicts: "BOBBY BACKLUND IS THE NEXT WWWF CHAMPION!

INSIDE Wrestling

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter King
Editor-in-Chief

The letters come in every day. Sometimes by the hundreds. Sometimes by the thousands. And most of them say the same thing: I should fire Associate Editor Dan Shocket.

It is time to answer these fans. First of all, I understand your concern. You love professional wrestling and don't want to see it hurt by villains--the very men Shocket supports. Many of you feel that if Shocket continues to write the way he feels, the rulebreakers will soon control the sport.

Fans, I am aware of the problem. I know your concerns. However, I will not now, or for the foreseeable future, fire Dan Shocket. Here are my reasons:

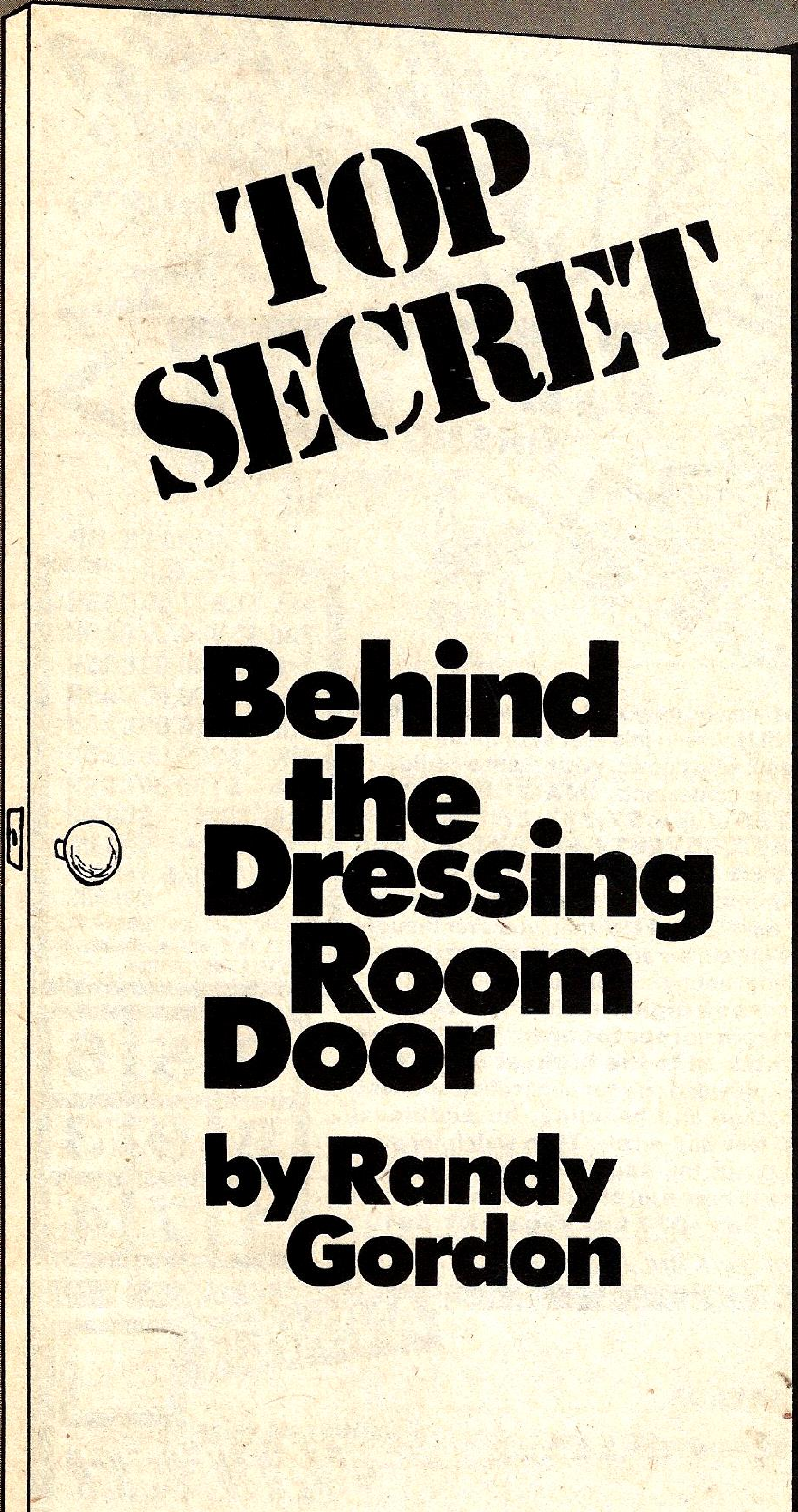
1--Freedom of the Press. I would be derelict in my duty as an editor and guardian of the first amendment if I did not let Dan write as he feels. I may not agree with him (and I do not), but he will be free to write his own views as long as I am editor.

2--Dan is probably the most talented sports writer in America. He is indeed a genius (some may argue he is an evil genius). If he were to be fired, this magazine would not be as good--yes, we would miss the talent and genius of Shocket.

3--Dan has recently signed a long term contract with INSIDE WRESTLING. The contract is legal and binding. It will be honored.

4--Because of his views, Dan can get stories no other wrestling reporter can get. Shocket's exclusive interview with The Sheik in the May 1977 issue was just voted "Most Important Sports Story of 1977" by the Wrestling Journalism League.

These are only a few reasons. You may not agree with me. However, my decision stands: Dan Shocket will not be fired!



TOP SECRET

Behind the Dressing Room Door

by Randy Gordon

ONE DAY, SOME rulebreaker will catch up with me and that will be it. I will have played one joke too many. But until that day comes, I will keep doing everything I can to upset those vicious lowlife scoundrels.

My arch enemy, Lou Albano, became this reporter's latest victim. With the aid of makeup expert Matt Fazio, I donned a foolproof disguise and entered Albano's dressing room. I had to shave off my moustache, but I didn't mind. I'd go to any length to get Albano.

As Lou was talking to Ken Patera and posing for pictures, I rifled through his street clothes, looking for his cigars. When I found them, I put little explosives in the tips of them. I fought back the laughter when Albano went into his shirt pocket 15 minutes later for a cigar. I, and I alone, knew what was about to happen.

Albano reached for a pack of matches. He held it to the cigar and puffed. After lighting it, Albano sat back in a leather chair as reporters and photographers milled around him. Suddenly, BANG!

He must have jumped three feet straight up! It was beautiful. I acted as stunned as everybody else.

"Who the hell did this?" Albano wanted to know. "I'll break the stupid person in half!"

From within the crowd of reporters I shouted, "Maybe Patera did it."

Albano was stunned.

"Wha . . . who said that?" But he wasn't really thinking of who said that. All he had on his mind was Patera, with whom I know he has been feuding. Although Albano, Patera and Dan Shocket play down the feud, they can't

(Continued on page 50)

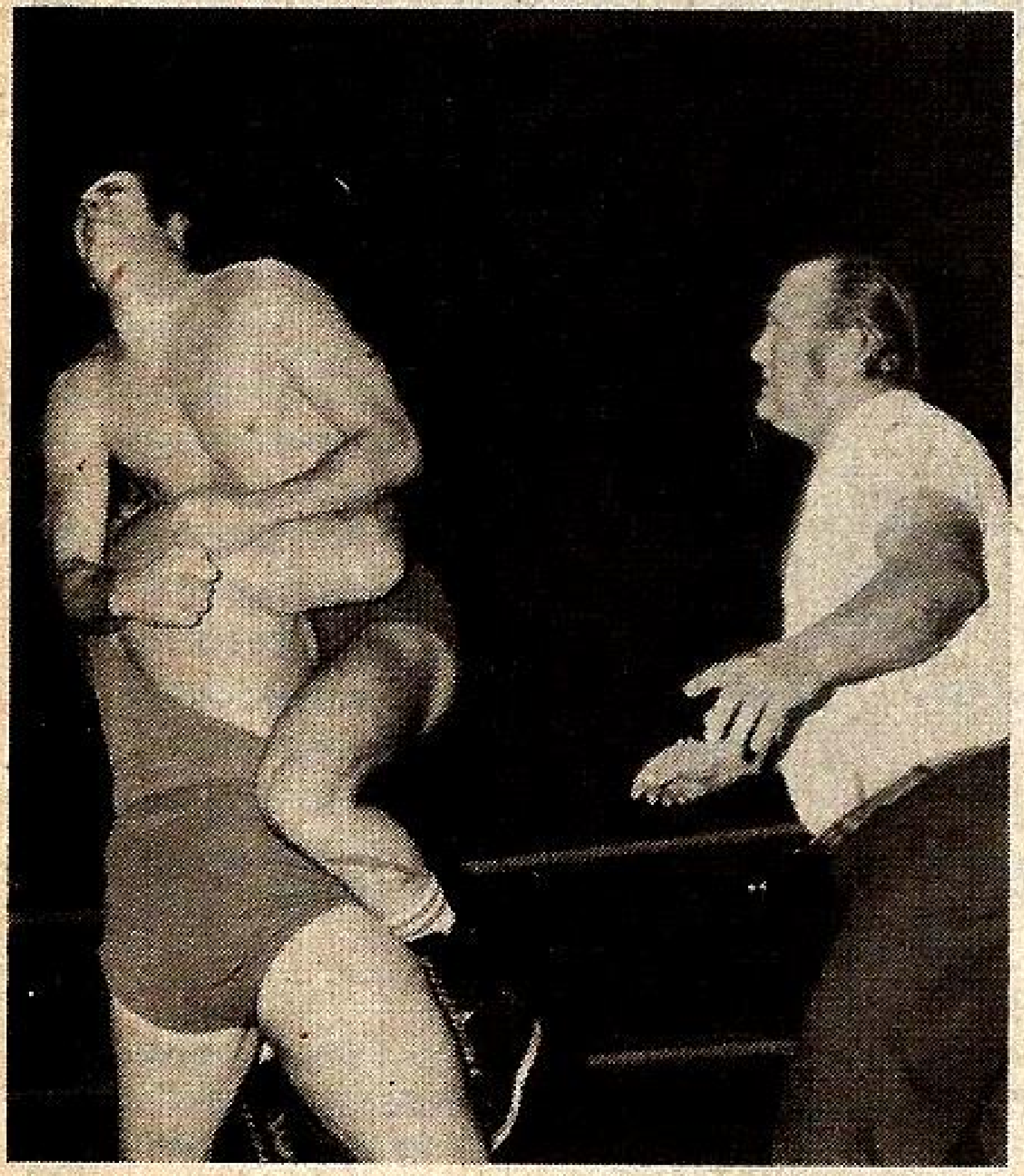
Body Slams & Pinfalls

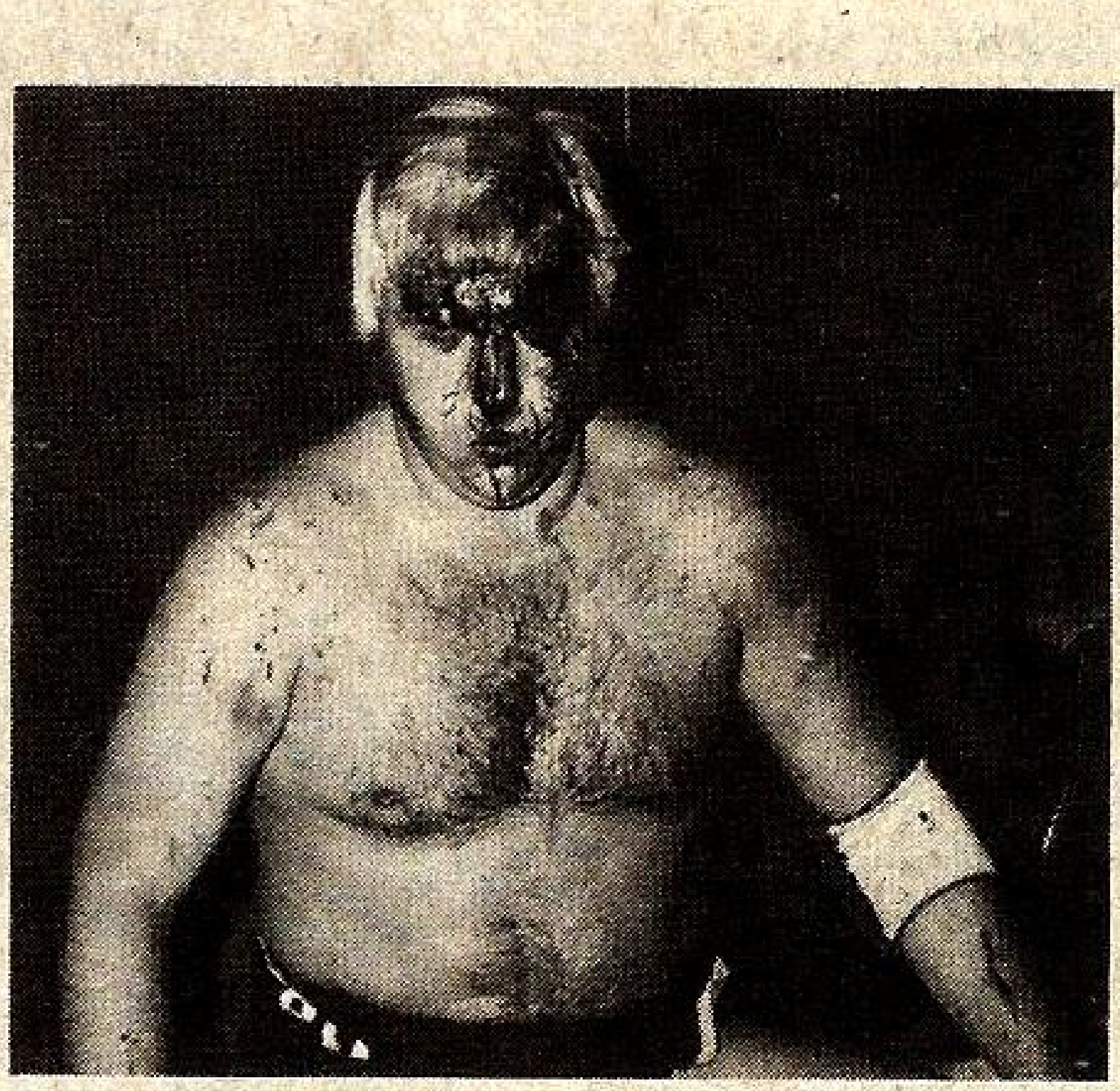
By Dan Shocket

THIS IS AN outrage! All of wrestling is now in disgrace. Those who believe in the integrity of wrestling must bow their heads in sorrow. Bobby Heenan has been suspended!

How foul, how vile, how despicable these AWA commissioners are. These disgusting creatures dare to commit a deed so wretched in public. Without Heenan, wrestling has been dealt a horrible blow. When one considers the excuses for this unconscionable action, the only result can be hatred and nausea!

The commissioners, revealing themselves to be gutless lackeys, accuse Heenan of interfering too much. Preposterous! Every time Bobby deigns to show his face, wrestling is that much the better. How can a genius interfere? The sport should treasure every movement Heenan makes. When people become more intelligent, Heenan's maneuvers will be studied in universities. Today, they get him suspended. A genius is rarely recognized in his own lifetime.


Bobby Heenan was suspended for hitting Greg Gagne with a chair.


Bobby Heenan (shown above bloodied and battered) has been suspended by the AWA.

Fortunately, Heenan's wrestlers will continue. They will earn the man enough money so his home for unwed mothers will continue to aid the poor and needy. However, there will necessarily have to be cutbacks in the laboratories battling to conquer cancer, solely supported by Heenan's funds. It might not be fair to suggest that every person who dies of cancer is being murdered by the AWA commissioners. We shall allow the record to speak for itself.

But this disgrace cannot continue. When a man of Heenan's excellent reputation is driven out of wrestling for even a minute, something is terribly wrong. The commissioners must be stopped. First comes the suspension, then the ban. Once the inquisitors find they can destroy Heenan, Albano, Blassie, Hart, and so many others will be next. The worst purge in sport history may result! Attention must be paid.

First, all decent wrestling fans must write to Stanley Blackburn, c/o Inside Wrestling, Box 38, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11570. This is the president of the AWA, the man who claims responsibility for this horrible action. In the best of all possible worlds, this reprobate would be turned out on the streets. However, he's clearly the fair-haired lackey of the Gagnes and others of their slimy ilk. The most we can hope to do is show this fellow he can't get away with ruining the sport.

Nick Bockwinkle is now on his own, his manager barred from all AWA arenas.

People intelligent enough to answer my call for action don't need to be told to write. This corrupt buffoon must know of the sorrow in your hearts. Anguish is fine if it leads to change.

Secondly, we must all organize. Whenever a manager is suspended like this, fans must band together

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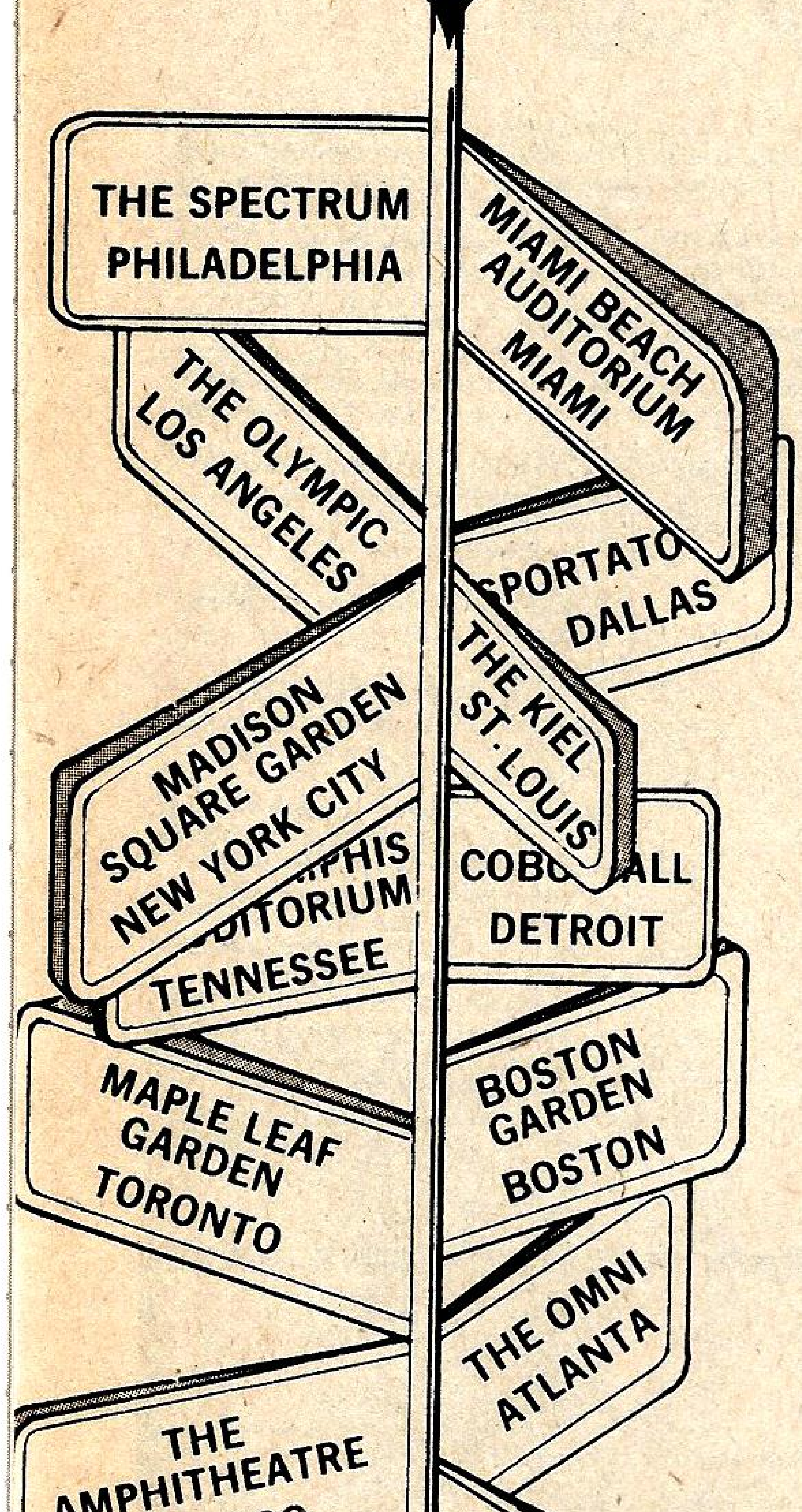
ON THE ROAD

with
Michael B. Kape

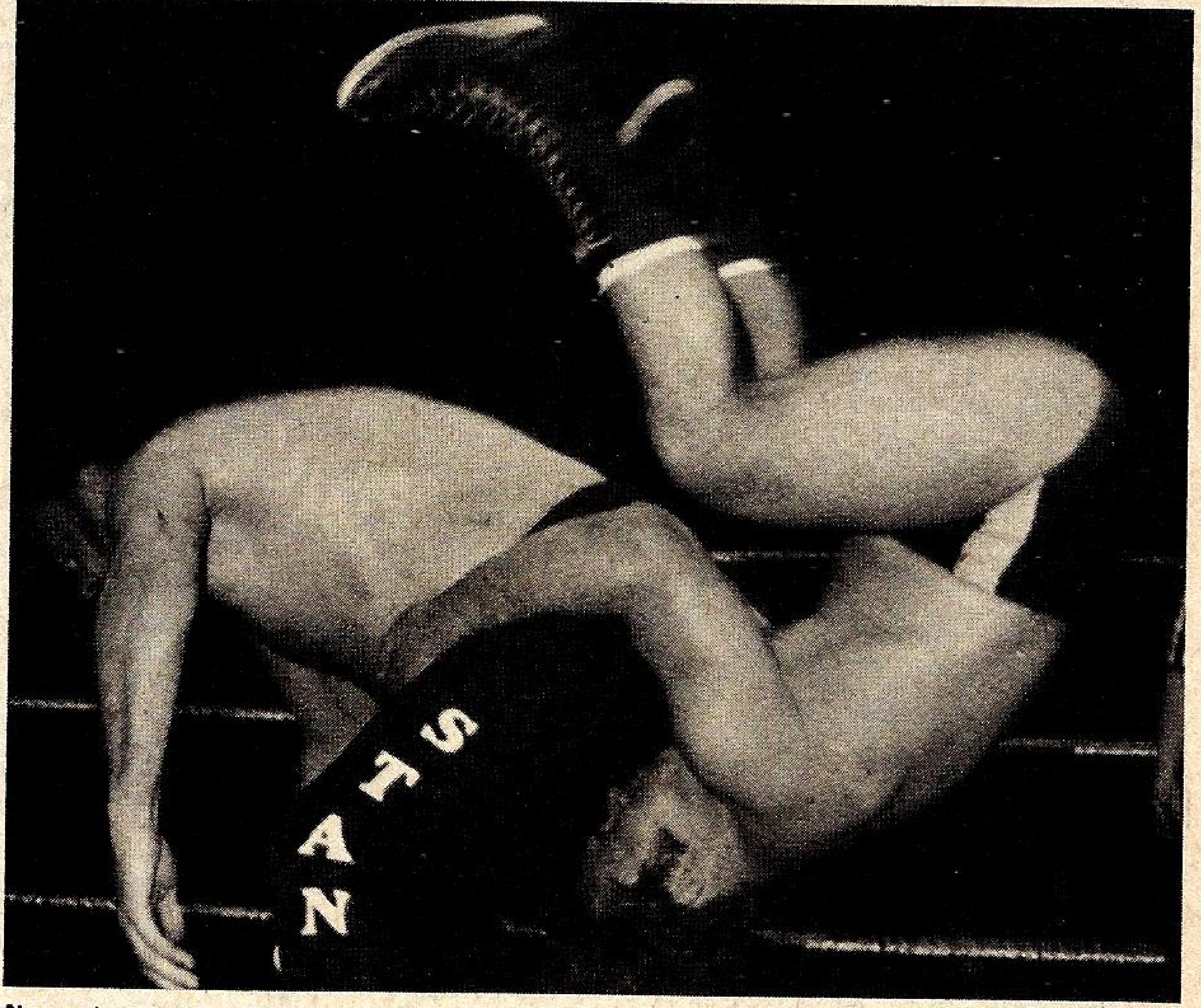

THE SPECTRUM
PHILADELPHIA
MIAMI BEACH
AUDITORIUM
MIAMI
THE OLYMPIC
LOS ANGELES
SPORTATO
DALLAS
MADISON
SQUARE GARDEN
NEW YORK CITY
THE KIEL
ST. LOUIS
PHIS
DITORIUM
TENNESSEE
COBO ALL
DETROIT
MAPLE LEAF
GARDEN
TORONTO
BOSTON
GARDEN
BOSTON
THE OMNI
ATLANTA
THE
AMPHITHEATRE
CHICAGO
THE
FAIRGROUNDS
RICHMOND

EASTHAMPTON, NEW YORK— When all is said and done, I can truthfully say I have learned a lesson. I won't give any more parties at my summer home here. It has become too much.

Once a year, I invite friends and working acquaintances to the house here on the beach. As should be expected, there are several wrestlers who are sent invitations. Usually, these parties are quiet affairs. The one this year was anything but quiet. And it will be a long time before I invite a lot of these people back to Easthampton.

My philosophy of being indifferent toward a wrestler's behavior in the ring was sorely tested. After all, I am good friends with men as divergent as Blackjack Lanza, Ken Patera, Bob Backlund, and Greg Gagne. I do not care if a man is a rulebreaker or a scientific wrestler. However, these men do care. They care a lot.

I should have listened when some friends told me never to invite Ken Patera and Tony Garea to the same party. Nor should I have had Larry Zbyszko and Stan Stasiak even in the same state. Next year, I'll know better.



Never invite Stan Stasiak and Larry Zbyszko to the same place at the same time. They're ready to go at each other no matter what the situation is!

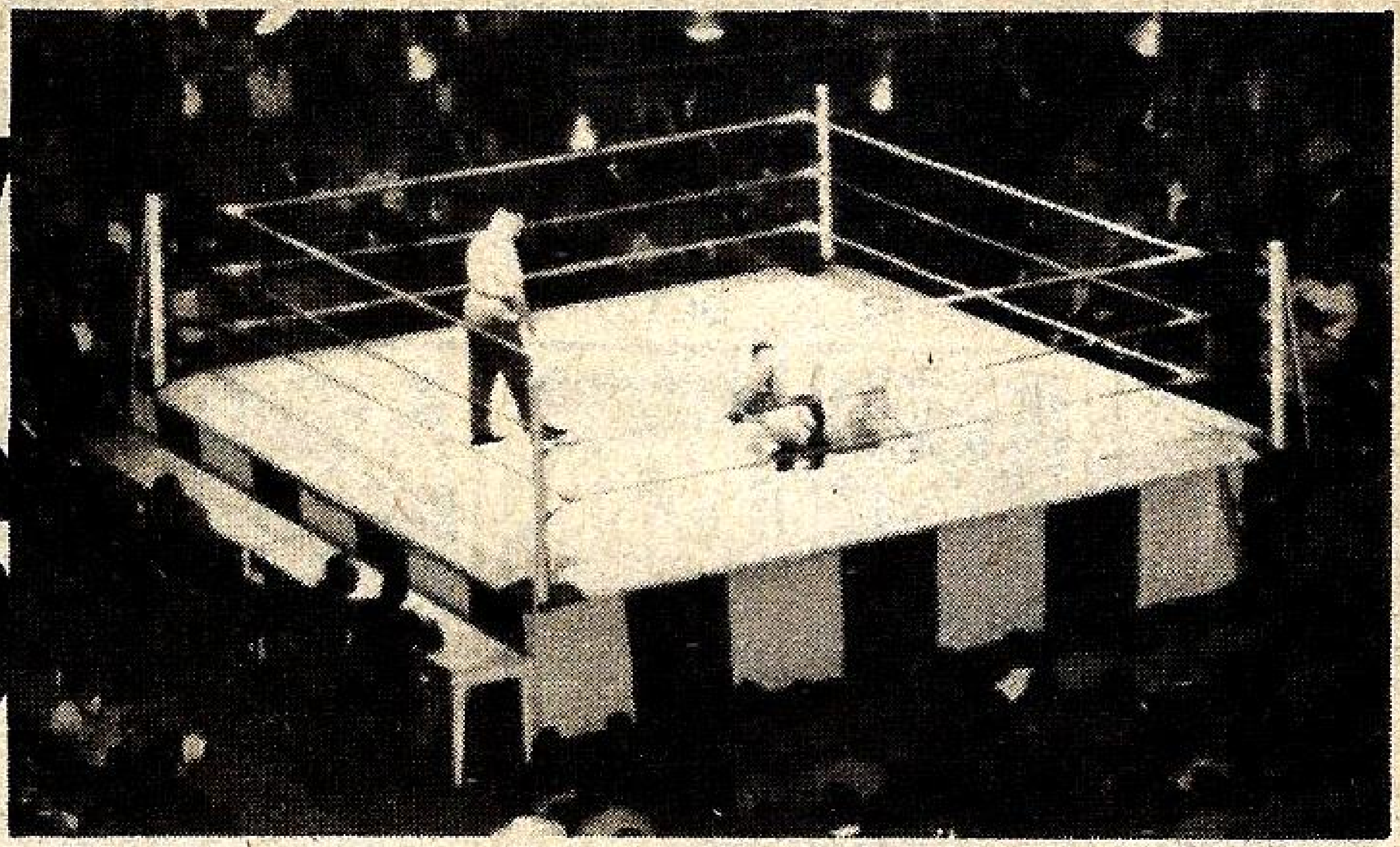
As I said, the party was anything but quiet. Oh, it started off right. Everyone was being civil. And things went well until after the barbecue on the beach. Among the people I invited to this gathering were my colleagues, Randy Gordon and Dan Shocket. Now I was vaguely aware that there was some kind of trouble between them, but since I usually spent most of my time on the road, I had no idea as to the extent of the problem. Now I do.

At first, everyone was getting along well with everyone else. Men who have been known to cripple or seriously injure opponents in battle were calmly talking with men who are strictly scientific wrestlers. The atmosphere was a bit strained, but all in all, things were going well. Then the trouble began.

I am not exactly sure how it started, but an argument began between Randy and Dan. I tried to stop it, asking them to settle their differences somewhere else besides my house. However, emotions took control over any rational thinking. The two were close to blows. Soon other people began to join in the argument. It

(Continued on page 48)

SINCERELY YOURS



WHAT HAPPENED?

When Bruno says, "Next Time I Wrestle Graham I'll Kill Him!" (August 1977), I believe him. And I think it's a shame. I had hoped that when Sammartino lost his title, he would accept it gracefully. He has always been a gentleman. What happened?

I am not particularly pleased with the idea of having Superstar Billy Graham as champion of the WWWF. But I am not about to do anything insane to prove my point. And I don't think Bruno should either. If he is given the chance to wrestle him again, fine. He should do his best to win back the belt. But he should not resort to Graham's tactics in order to do so. That would be unseemly for a man of Sammartino's stature.

A little reason goes a long way, especially in these situations.

LYNNE HOCHLAN
Lake Placid, N.Y.

IT'S A LONG ROAD

In my opinion, "Terry Funk's Long Road Back to Glory" (August 1977) is going to be a difficult trek for the former NWA champion. He may never regain the glory he once had ever again.

Harley Race did something to Terry. I'm not sure what it is, but Funk has not been the same since he lost the belt. In this match against Jack Brisco, Terry should have been able to win easily. Instead, the result was a draw. That just proves what I mean.

We may never see a Funk as NWA champion ever again.

AILEEN BUTLER
Richmond, Va.

IS IT FAIR?

"Ken Patera—NWA Champion?" (August 1977) was a very sad tale of the harsh realities of wrestling. By all rights, Ken should now be the owner of the NWA belt. Instead, all he has is bad memories.

This should prove to Patera that he does not need Lou Albano as a manager. If it had not been for Albano, Patera could now be champion. He did win that title match against Race fairly. He satisfied every criteria for becoming champion. But Lou Albano spoiled everything for Ken, and that just isn't fair.

Ken, will you now listen to reason? Get rid of Albano before he completely destroys what is left of your career.

MARY McLEAN
Hamilton, Ont.

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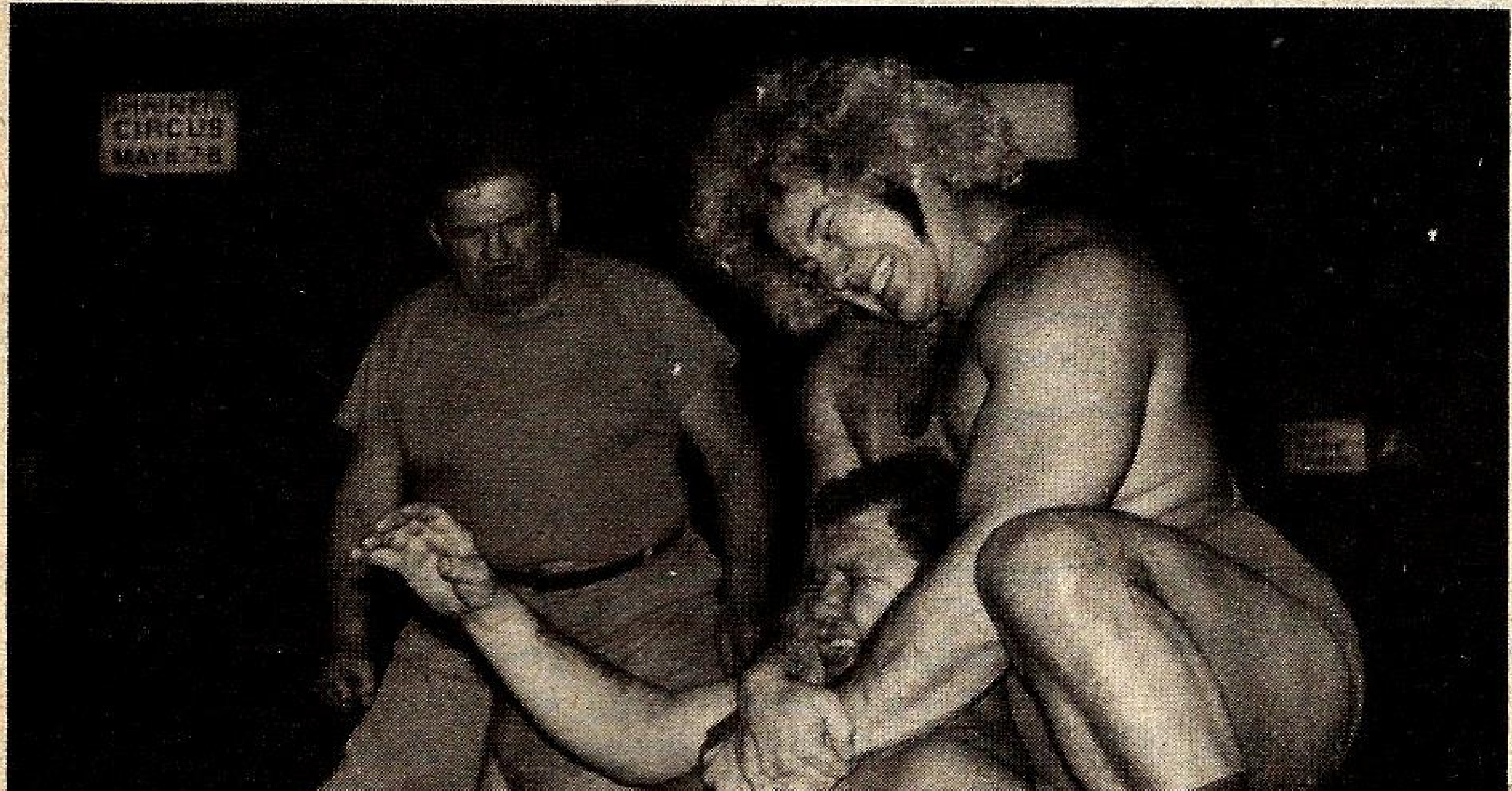
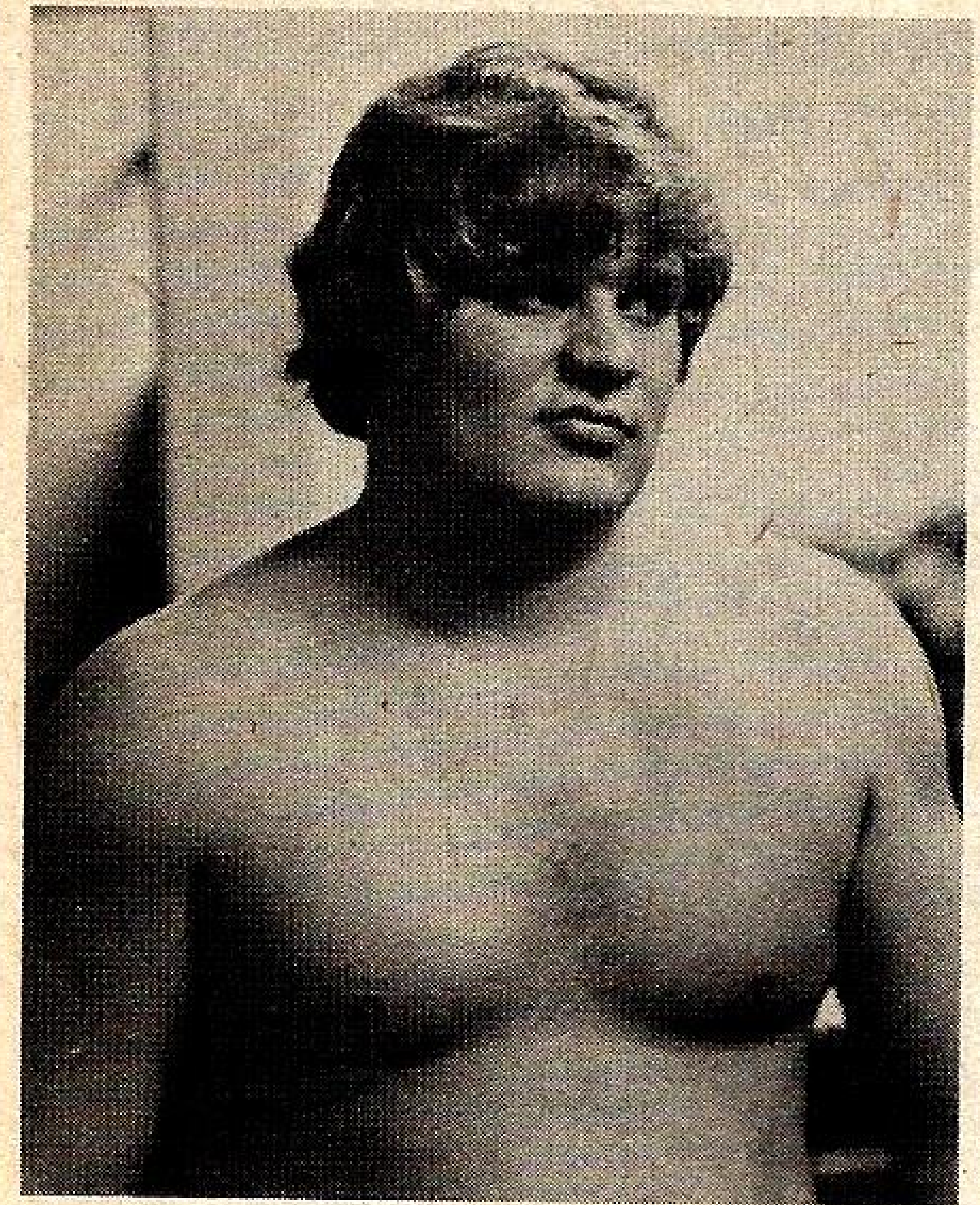


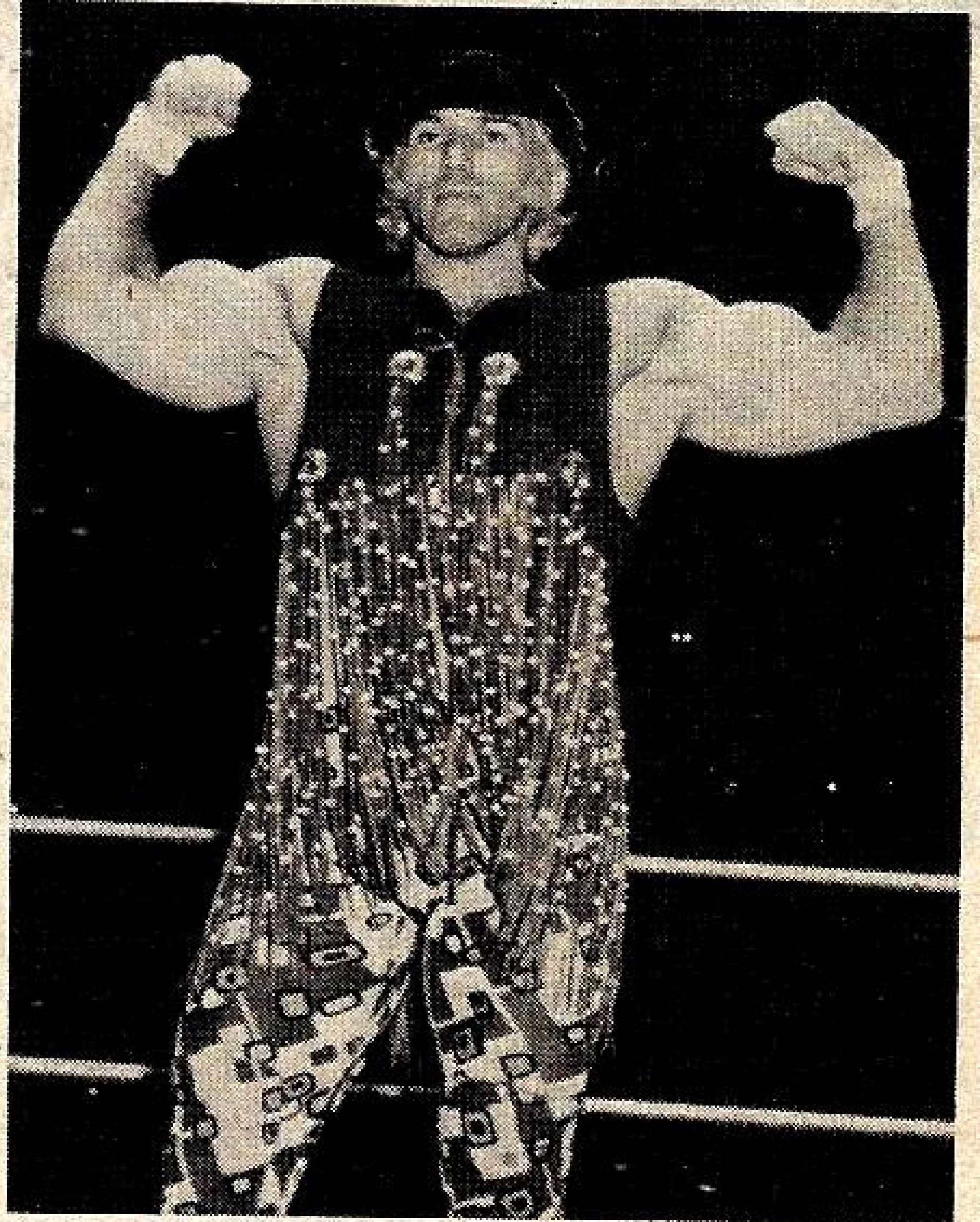
According to many eyewitnesses, Ken Patera took the title belt from Harley Race in this match. However, the intervention of Ken's manager, Lou Albano, is responsible for Ken not being NWA champ today.

NAMES MAKI

It is official. WWWF champion SUPERSTAR GRAHAM has issued a formal challenge to NWA heavyweight king HARLEY RACE. Top promoters from both organizations are now busy trying to work out details for what could be wrestling's first Superbowl. NICK BOCKWINKLE, champion of the AWA, has stated he will gladly combat the winner of a Race/Graham confrontation . . . Even though RICK STEAMBOAT won the Mid-Atlantic Television title from RIC FLAIR, Flair is still calling himself the TV champion. "I lost on a fluke!" insists the blonde rulebreaker. "I am still the champion and everyone—especially Steamboat—knows it!" . . . We reported here a few issues ago that MIGHTY IGOR has challenged IVAN PUTSKI to a showdown. We were awaiting Putski's reply, and here it is: "Igor and I are fellow countrymen and I respect him. But I will never back down from a challenge. Any promoter who wants to make the match, has my word I will battle him." That match would prove to be one of the greatest tests of strength and stamina ever seen in a wrestling arena.



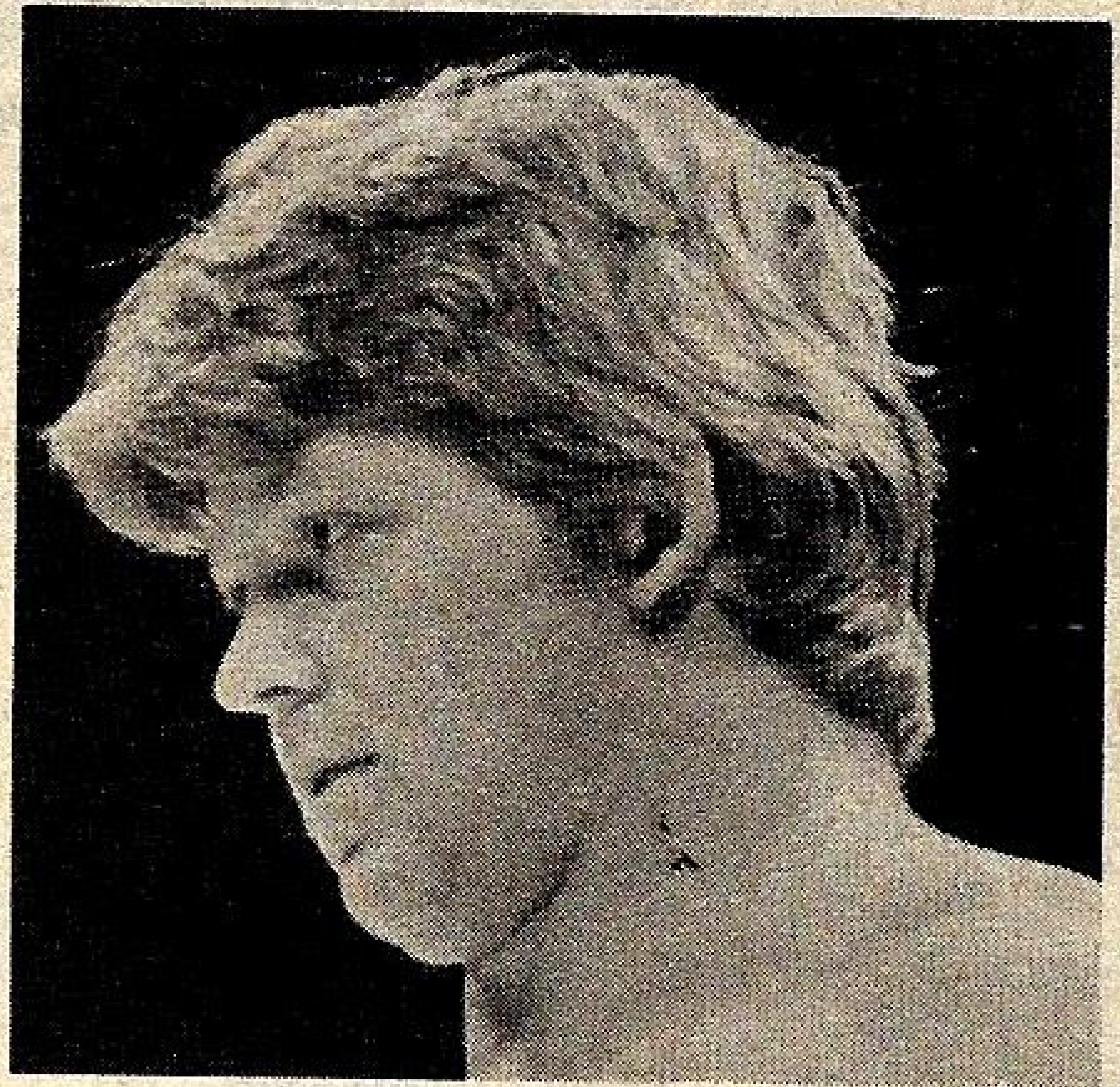
DICK SLATER



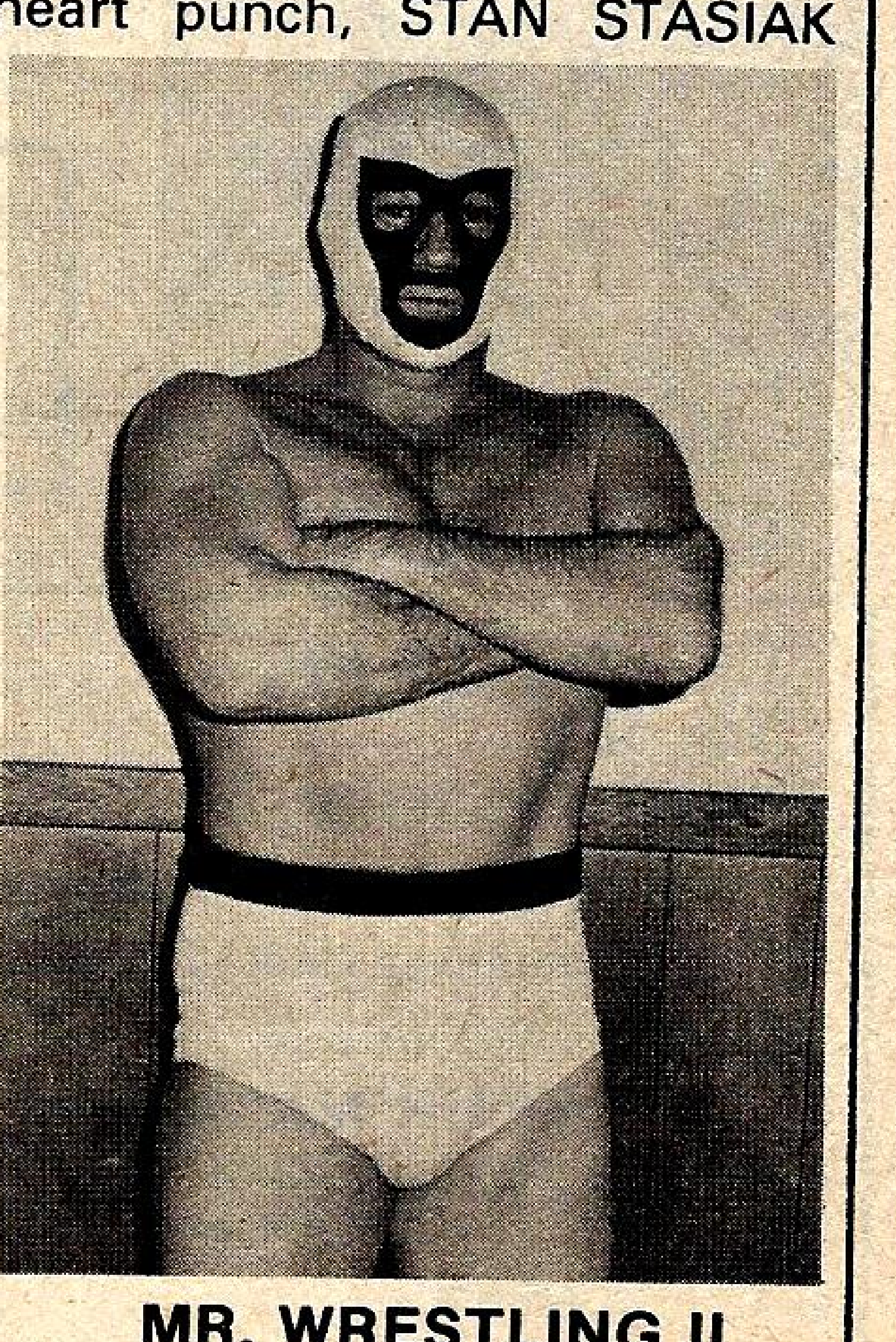
SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

DICK SLATER has issued a formal statement to the press claiming that the man under the mask of MR. WRESTLING II is none other than veteran champion BUDDY ROGERS . . . BARON VON RASCHKE has accepted some bouts in Mid-Atlantic areas, anxious to get a match against hated enemy BOBO BRAZIL . . . CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO challenged BOB BACKLUND to a match. Bob accepted. All of a sudden, Albano "is too damn busy to wrestle that punk kid!"

JACK and JERRY BRISCO failed to recapture the Florida tag team title from PAT PATTERSON and IVAN KOLOFF . . . Texas fans are proud of their new state tag team kings—JIMMY SNUKA and GINO HERNANDEZ . . . The "American Dream," DUSTY RHODES is making life a complete nightmare for BRUISER BRODIE. He promises Texas fans he will run Brodie out of the state . . . Can you imagine a team composed of MIL MASCARAS and ANDRE THE GIANT? It may become reality in the very near future. Reports indicate that they have worked out in the gym on occasion. When their schedules permit it, they may join forces . . . Noticing that most wrestlers have worked out a defensive maneuver for his heart punch, STAN STASIAK



BOB BACKLUND

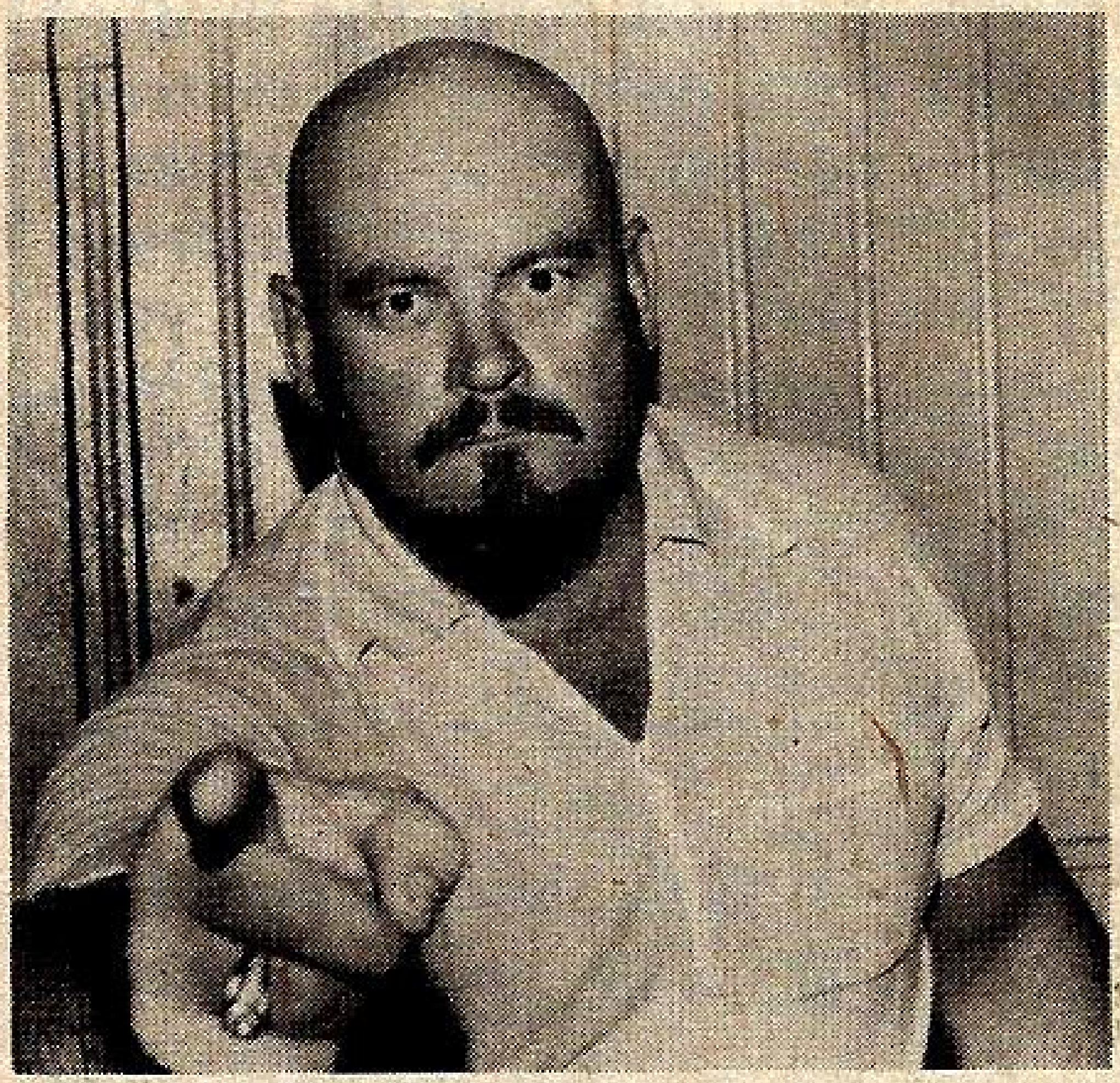


MR. WRESTLING II

N' NEWS

Bill Apter reporting...

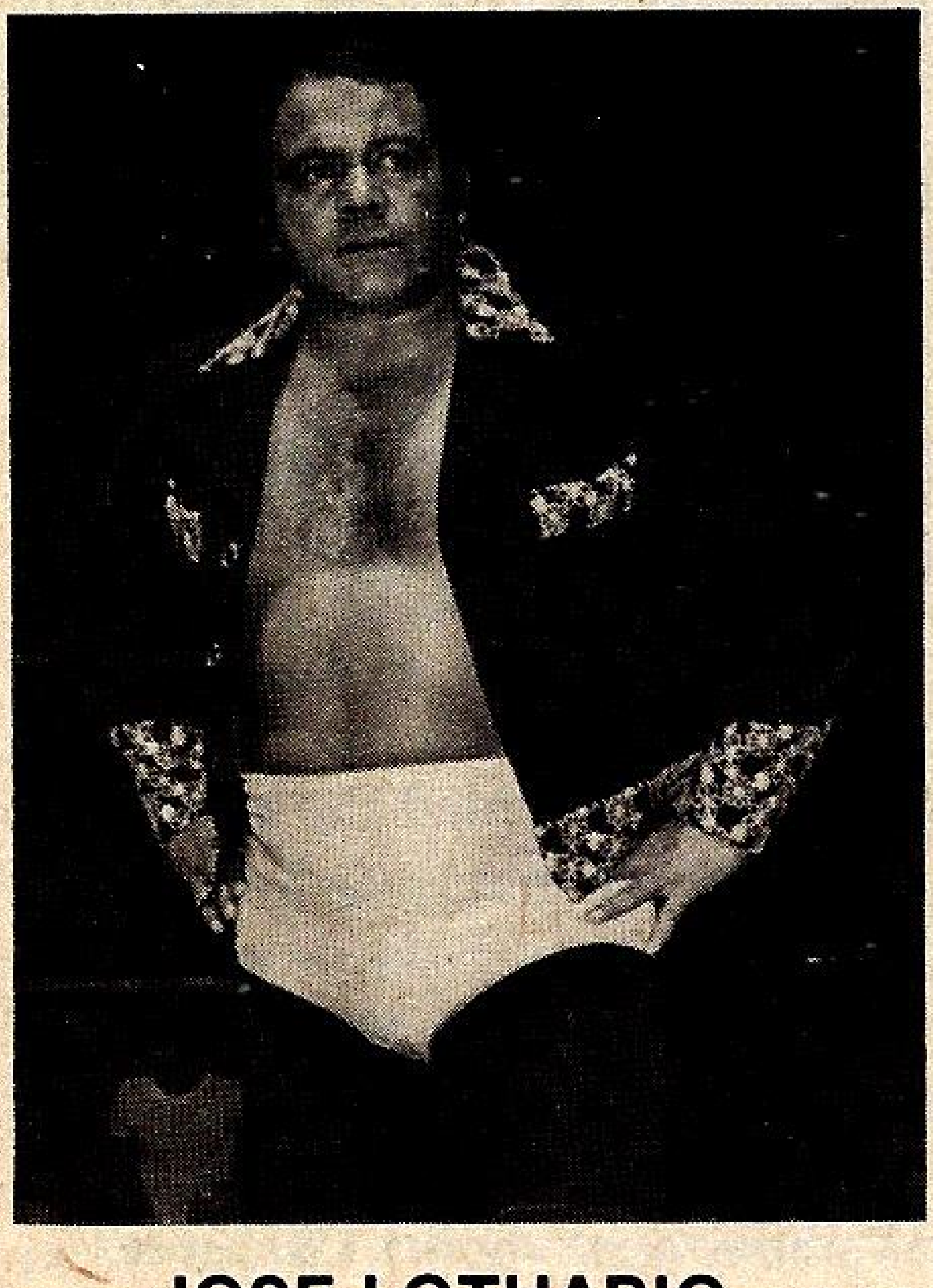
will unveil a new punishing tactic he claims to be far deadlier. If that is the case, the commissions will ban it immediately—or will they?



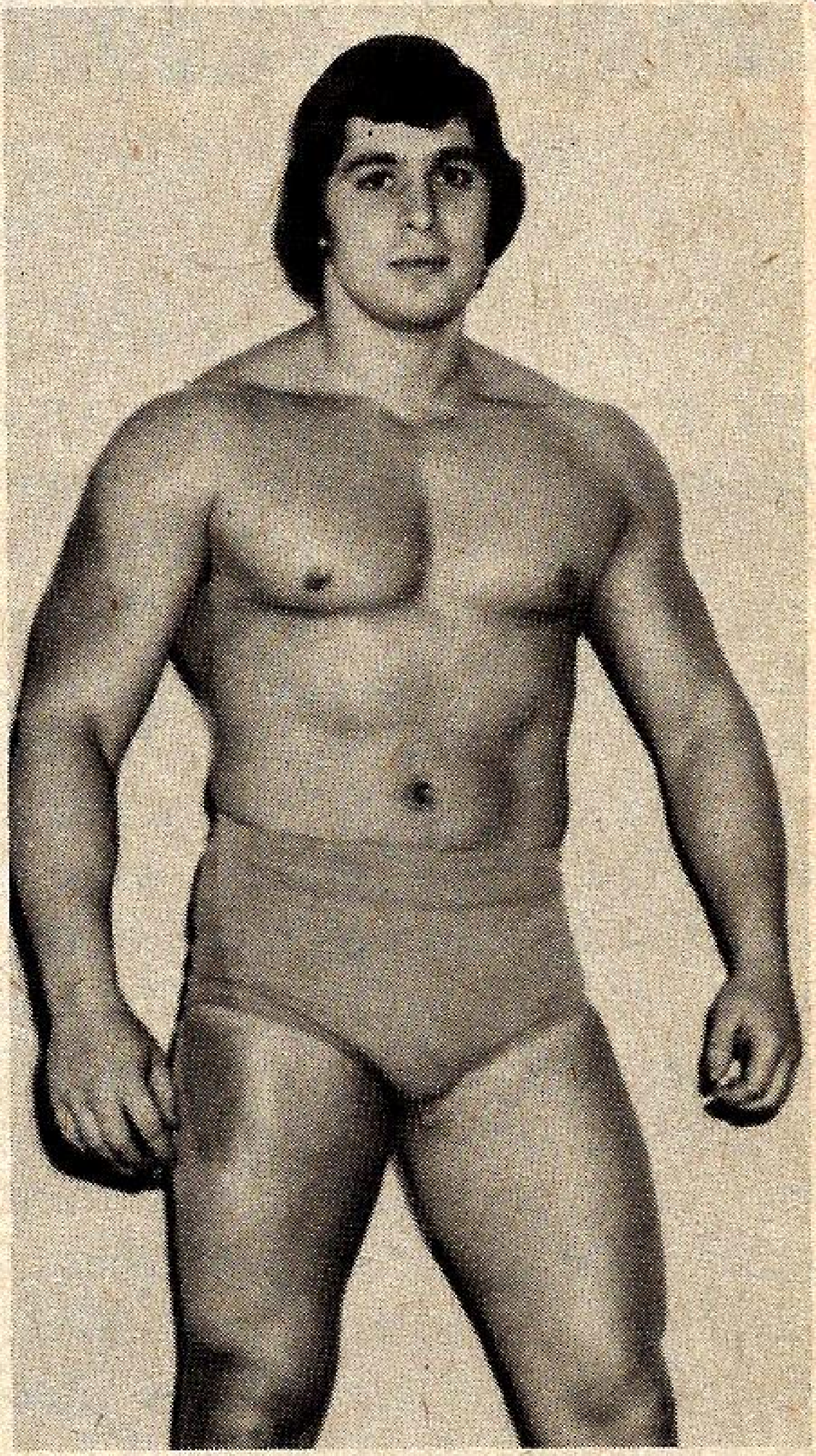
IVAN KOLOFF

Our correspondent in Japan, Koichi Yoshizawa, reports that ANTONIO INOKI and boxer CHUCK WEPNER wil go at it in a boxer vs. wrestler confrontation later this year . . . Sworn enemies DICK MURDOCH and STAN HANSEN are rumored to be patching up their feud . . . BULLDOG BOB BROWN added to the list of men unable to take the Missouri State belt from JACK BRISCO . . . Since losing the AWA tag team title, BLACKJACK LANZA and BOBBY DUNCUM have decided they will stay together as a team and try to regain the belts from GREG GAGNE and JIM BRUNZELL . . . DON MURACO suffered a throat injury in a match against IVAN KOLOFF. It is so bad doctors do not know if Don's voice will ever recover its full vocal capacity . . . ARMANDO GUERRERO moving into main events in California . . . PEPPER GOMEZ and DEAN HO have formed a top team on the west coast . . . Experts pick DORY FUNK JR. to win the NWA title he once held by the end of the year.

VERNE GAGNE assures everyone he is not retiring. "I have heard many rumors saying I was quitting," says Verne. "Don't believe those rumors. I want the AWA title back!" . . . PEDRO MORALES and RAY STEVENS, once arch enemies, have now joined to wipe out BOBBY HEENAN and his family . . . By the way, Heenan's suspension still sticks according to AWA officials, so now Morales and Stevens can concentrate on Lanza, Duncum and Bockwinkle. It's one down and three to go if you're keeping score . . . The talented high-flying DINO BRAVO is negotiating with WWWF promoters for several appearances in their area . . . CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW and the entire wrestling scene still wondering where THE EXECUTIONERS have disappeared to . . . WALDO VON ERICH plans to eliminate PAUL JONES from the Georgia scene . . . How could the NWA sanction the rulebreaking RODDY PIPER as a referee? We demand an explanation!



JOSE LOTHARIO



DINO BRAVO

A new maniacal masked man, TEXAS RED is terrorizing California . . . TONY MARINO: "Sure, I care that the fans boo me. I do not understand why they do it. They do not have one good reason to do so. I do not pull hair, I do not gouge eyes, I wrestle scientifically. I wish some of the fans would write me and tell my why I am not pleasing them! . . . OX BAKER vows to make JOSE LOTHARIO "an invalid." He also plans a similar fate for MIL MASCARAS . . . Finally—BRUNO SAMMARTINO, free of the WWWF title, *does* want that title back!

See you next month! □

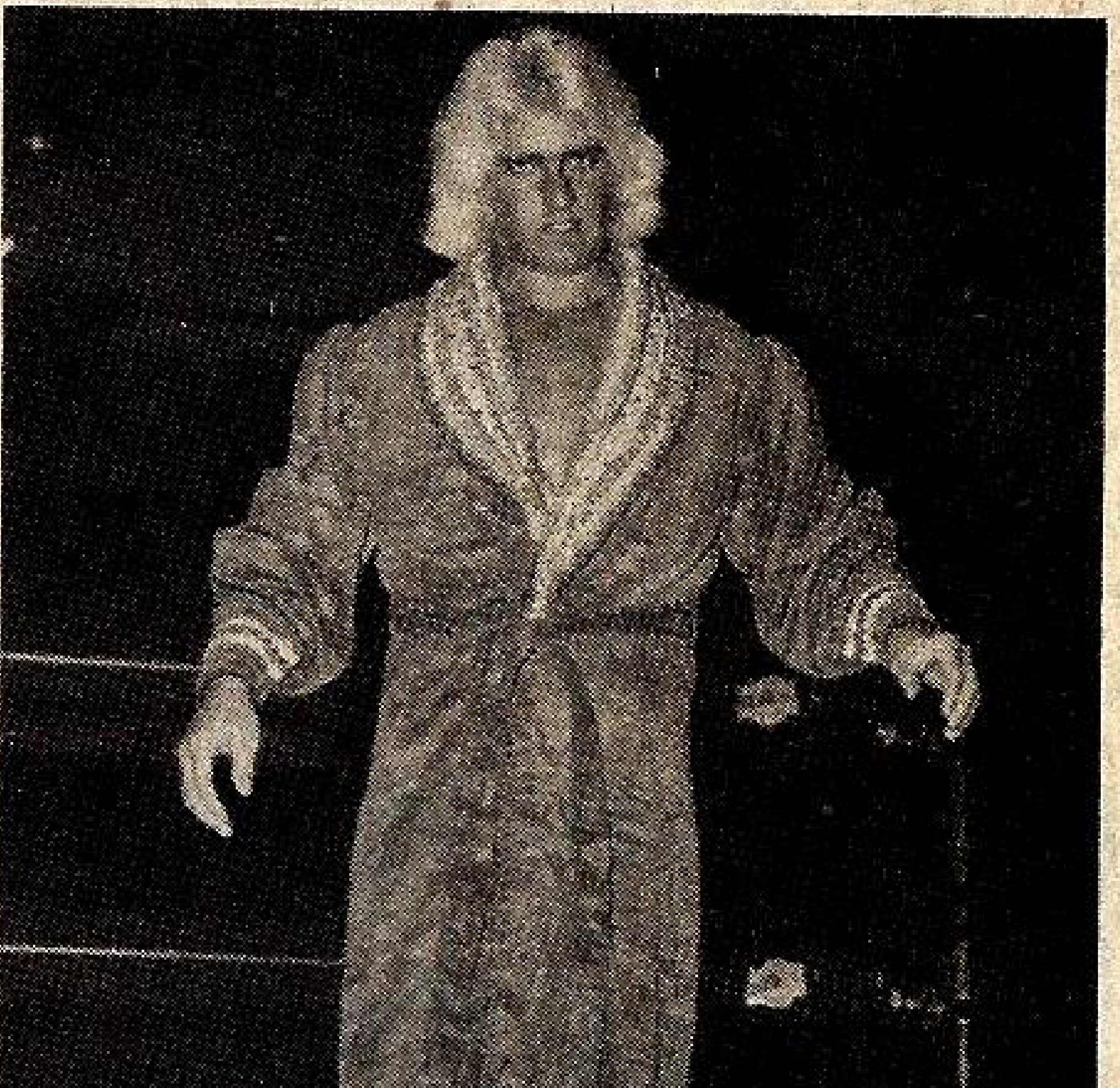
NEWS FROM THE WRESTLING CAPITALS

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO—*Correspondent:* **Paul R. Neville**—A great night of action was topped off by Harley Race's title defense against former NWA champion Dory Funk Jr. The two out of three fall match saw both Dory and Harley wrestle scientifically through much of the battle. Dory captured the first fall with a perfectly executed suplex. The second fall was all Race. Dory became so frustrated at not being able to win the second fall, he used illegal tactics and was disqualified. Fall three ended when the time limit ran out.

Erving Smith and Jerry Kozak grappled to a draw . . . Terry Funk and Ted Dibiosi stopped Dennis Stamp and Cyclone Negro . . . Abdullah the Butcher crushed Nick Kozak.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA—*Correspondent:* **Mike Nazarevich**—Rick Steamboat took the TV title away from Ric Flair in a wild battle. After six minutes of action, Flair maneuvered Steamboat into position for a flying neckbreaker. After expertly applying the hold, Flair picked the weakened Steamboat up and bodyslammed him. Next he whipped Rick into the ropes. When Rick came off on the rebound, he was caught with a devastating elbow smash. Flair then tried a bodypress. Amazingly enough, Steamboat kicked out! The two began running the ropes and finally they collided, sending Rick out of the ring with Flair lying on the mat, dazed. Steamboat recovered, went onto the ring apron and mounted the ropes. As Flair rose to his feet, Steamboat met him with a flying double judo chop. Then Steamboat kept up his attack and finally won the title!

Dory Funk Jr. (above, headlocking Chavo Guerrero) failed to regain the NWA title. Ric Flair (below) lost the Mid-Atlantic TV title to Rick Steamboat.



ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI—*correspondent:* **James Carpenter**—Jack Brisco retained his Missouri state title by stopping the game Bulldog Bob Brown. It appeared Brown was doing well until Jack decided to unleash an attack of dropkicks and flying headscissors. Finally, a jackknife took Jack onto victory.

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to Correspondent Editor, Box 38, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

Bobby Duncum squared off against Dory Funk Jr. A feud had been brewing between these two Texans and finally came to a head. The match saw very little scientific wrestling. When the dust cleared, it was Funk who reigned superior.

Black Angus won a 12 man battle royal . . . Rufus R. Jones and Wilbur Snyder stopped Jim Valiant and Ray Stevens.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA—*Correspondent:* **Lynn Cantrell**—Atlanta promoter Paul Jones recently celebrated his 76th birthday by putting on a sensational show at the Omni. Dick Slater defended his Georgia state title against wrestler Paul Jones, a man who has been after the title for quite some time. It was a bloody match from start to finish.

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INSIDE WRESTLING

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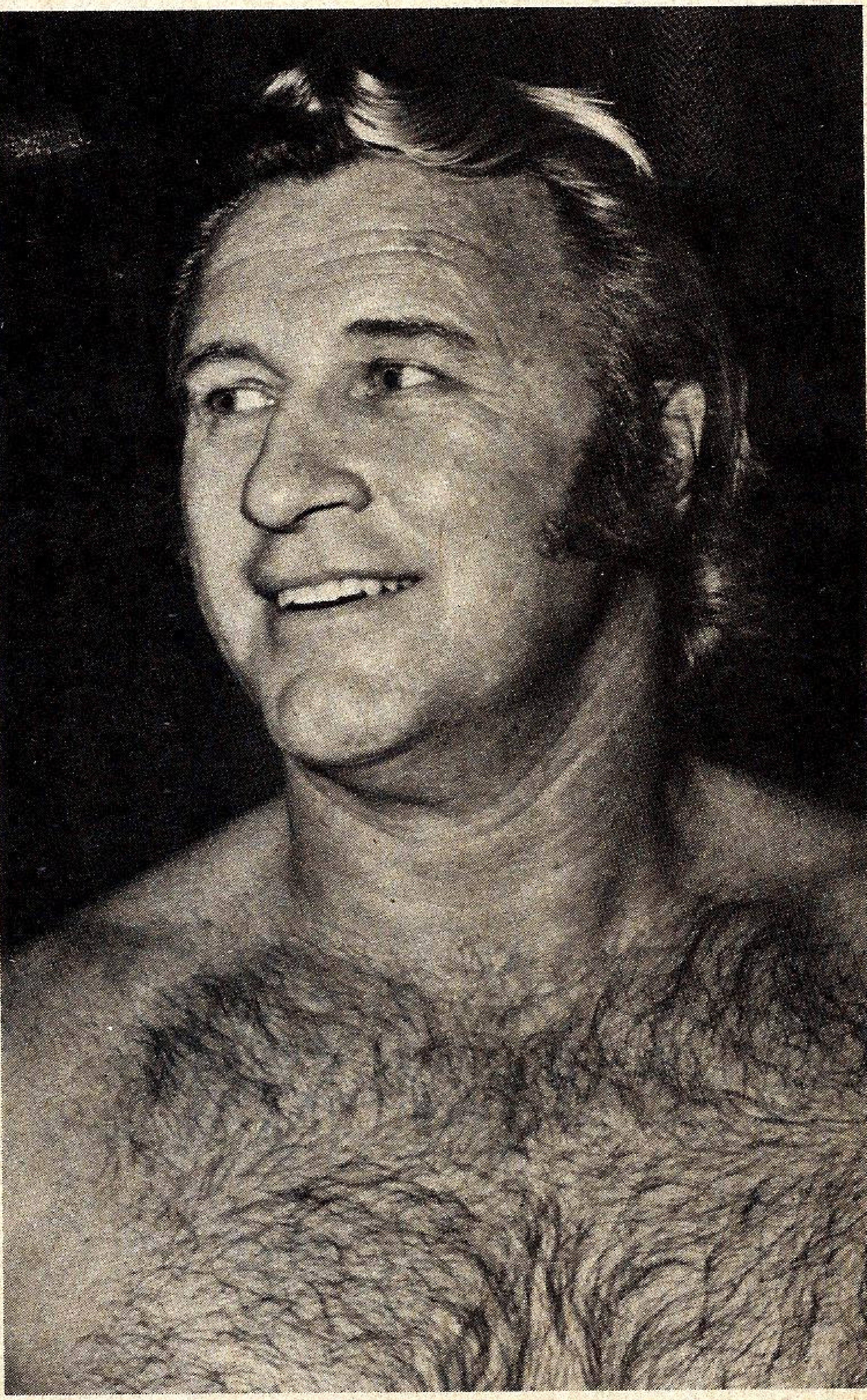
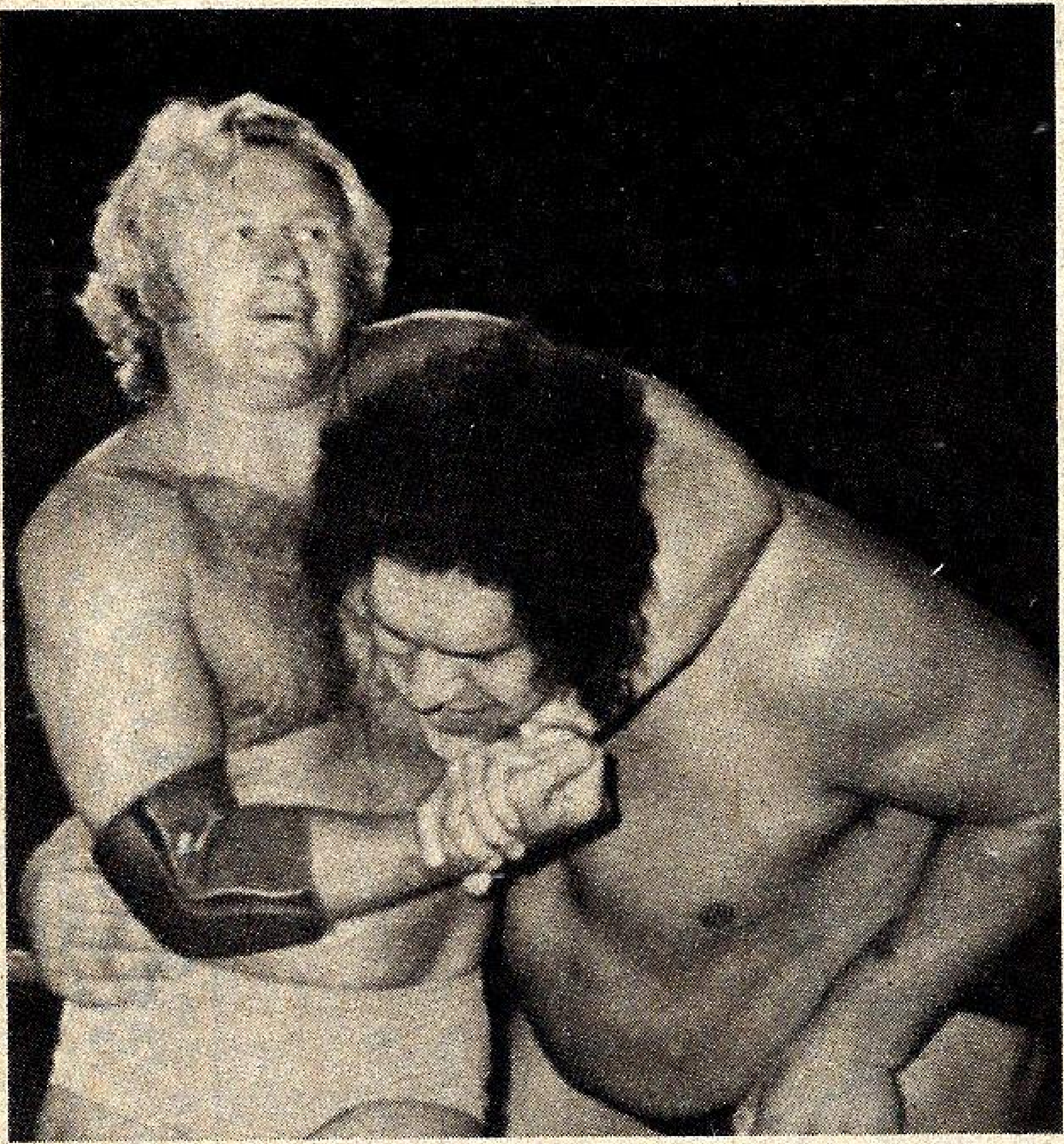
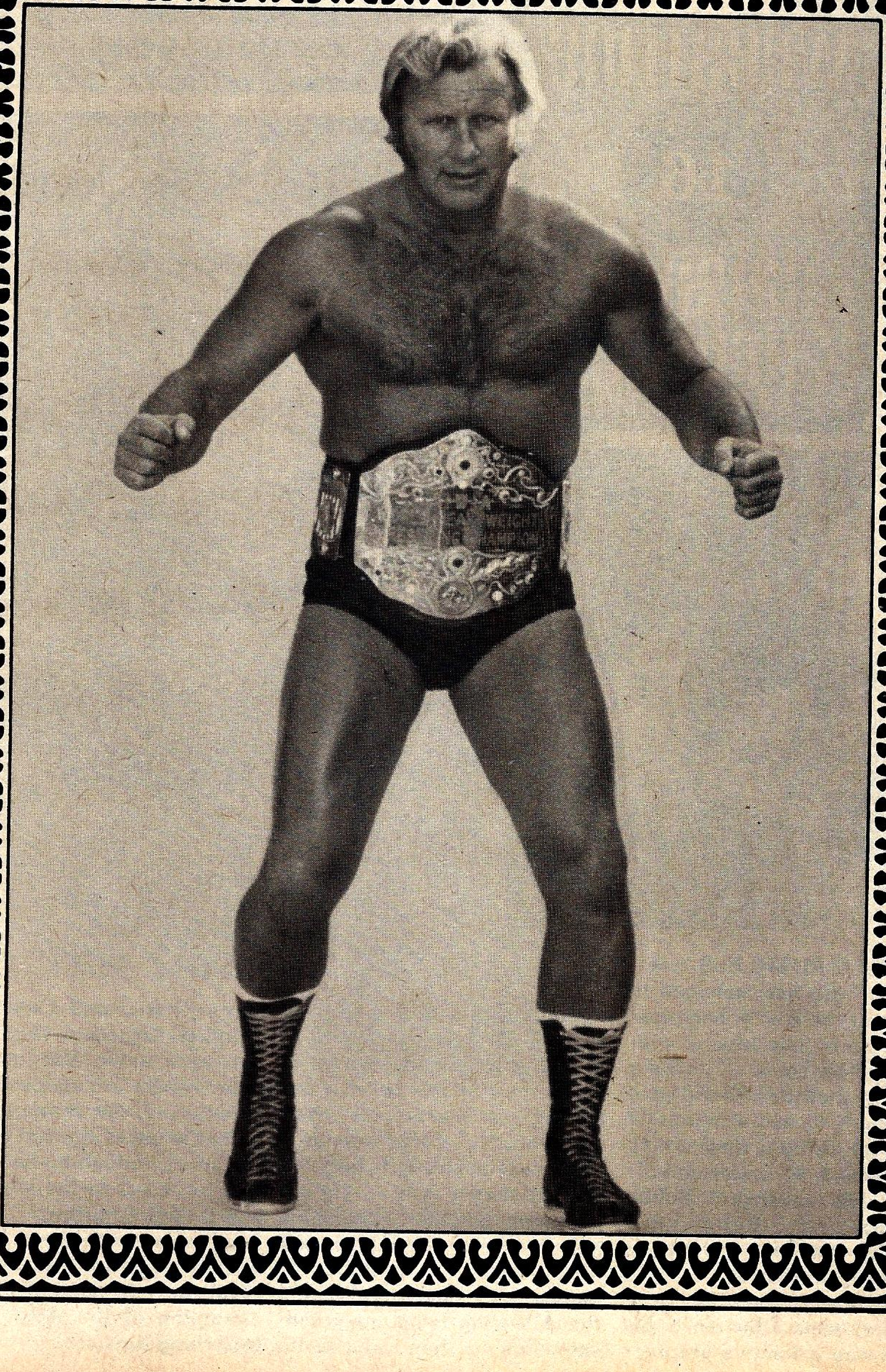
CAPSULE PROFILE

NICK BOCKWINKLE





HE'S A RUTHLESS wrestler who has managed to hold onto the AWA championship longer than anyone ever expected he could . . . He's a fierce competitor who will go to any length to win a match *("I don't like losing. I think that's easy enough to understand.")* . . . His manager, Bobby Heenan, has been very helpful—to the point of interfering in matches . . . He has always wanted to be a wrestler, especially since his father was a famous grappler *("There was a time when the name Warren Bockwinkle struck fear into the hearts of every man in the sport. I am trying to carry on that tradition.")* . . . He depends a great deal on strength, but he is also extremely agile . . . He will go to any lengths to retain his belt, including getting himself disqualified . . . With his partner, Ray Stevens, he held the AWA tag team championship longer than anyone in history *("Ray and I were the greatest tag team this sport has ever seen. But we can never repeat our success.")* . . . Has somehow managed to defeat many of the top men in the sport, though he has often had to resort to the lowest of illegal tactics to do so . . . If the need arises, he can be an excellent scientific wrestler . . . Don't be surprised if Nick is champion of the AWA for a long, long time. □



SHOULD WE APOLOGIZE TO BLACKJACK MULLIGAN?

As U.S. Champion, Blackjack Mulligan has brought disgrace to the title. So should we start rating him?

AN EXAMINATION of the NWA in INSIDE WRESTLING'S official ratings show Blackjack Mulligan's name listed for the first time in months. To some people, most notably Mulligan, the grappler's exclusion these past few issues has been an outrage. They just might be right.

Mulligan is the U.S. Champion. It's a highly respected title with a long and honorable history. Some of the best wrestlers have struggled valiantly to earn this belt. Any man who owns the title is a contender for the NWA world championship. At least, that's usually the case.

Right now, the NWA is in a state of upheaval. Harley Race is its champion. Race has had a checkered career, to put it mildly. He has gone through periods of disaster and defeat. Many men can claim victories over him. All these men deserve title shots. There are more than 10 of them.

To decide how to rate these men, we must go over the matches they

(Continued on page 52)

Although he has been U.S. champion, Blackjack Mulligan has not been included in INSIDE WRESTLING'S official ratings. Perhaps this was our mistake. Many people think so. Read this story and make up your own mind

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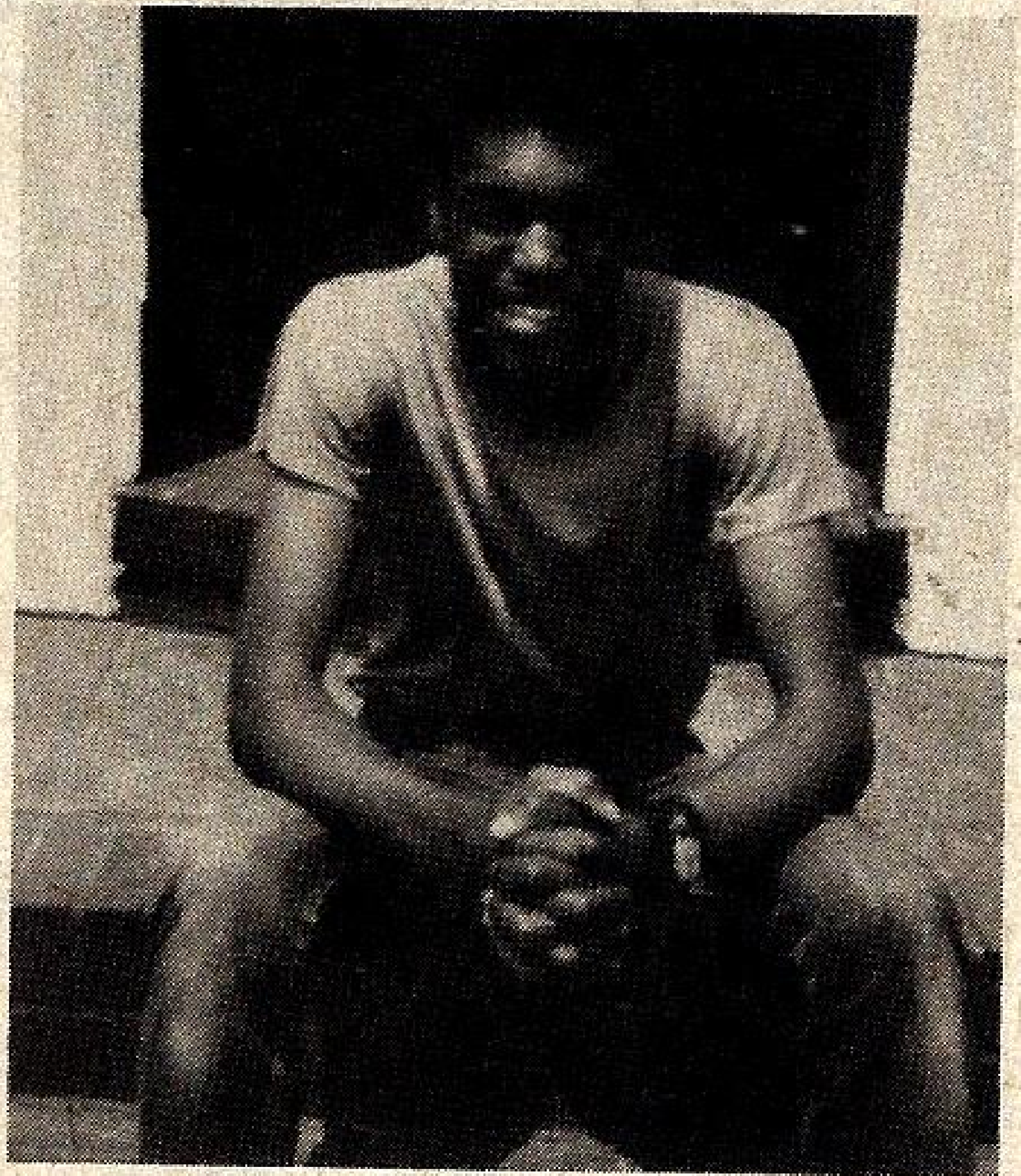


REESE ROBINSON
QUEENS, NEW YORK

I should be wrestling fan of the month because I made a New Year's resolution to see every wrestling match in Madison Square Garden, regardless of the consequences. This meant braving this year's frigid winter, but each time it was worth it.

I am currently working on a television movie based on the lives of professional wrestlers. My script should be finished in a few months. It will be a fictional drama but realistic. With this project I hope to bring more fans into the sport.

Wrestling is indeed a dedicated team of men and women showing their greatness.

GUEST JUDGE: ANDRE THE GIANT

THE GRANDMOTHER of my friend lay dying. The doctor gave up hope, predicting the woman would die within a week. The poor woman was in great pain. The only thing that would ease her agony was for my friend, no more than six years old, to sing folksongs to her. *Sur Le Pont D'Avignon, Savez-Vous Plantez Les Choix,* and other French folksongs filled her room day after day.

Today, the woman is over 100 years old. She recovered from that illness, though medical science couldn't save her. The love of her grandson made her well. As the doctors explained to the thankful family, "Sometimes, help is found where no one would seek it. Love, given freely, was what the woman needed most. It gave her the will to conquer the disease. You don't have to be a doctor to effect cures. Help can come from everywhere."

"I've never forgotten that. The best thing a person can do is give his or her all for the thing that matters most to them. No matter how unimportant it might seem, any contribution might be the miracle everyone seeks.

Many fans wrote to say they hope

RESTLING'S
E MONTH

to become professional wrestlers. That's fine, and I wish them all the luck in the world. But Reese Robinson, my choice for "Top Fan of the Month," has chosen another method of helping the sport he loves. Few people have attempted to do what Reese is trying. The courage to be a pioneer must be rewarded. I hope selecting Reese as the top fan will spur him on to complete his script.

Someday, the movie made from Reese's screenplay may be responsible for wrestling enjoying even more success. Some young athlete not sure which sport to pursue may watch the movie and decide to become a wrestler. This same young man or woman may turn out to be the greatest wrestler in history. And the sport will have Reese Robinson to thank.

One can never predict where these things will lead. That is what makes Reese's venture so exciting. The delight of the unknown has driven on explorers from the time of the caveman to the astronauts. It's similar to the thrill of combat, not knowing what will happen until the final moment. Reese and I are companions into the unknown.

There were many fine essays I read. I can think of over 100 deserving special attention. However, I could only choose one. Reese Robinson is the man. □

HOW YOU CAN BECOME WRESTLING'S FAN OF THE MONTH

If you think you deserve this honor, simply send us a photo of yourself and a 100-word essay telling why you're the best fan. This can take any form from straight narrative to a poem. Photos cannot be returned.

The entries will be judged by our staff and a different wrestling star each month. The grappler will also tell why he voted the way he did, which may be the most revealing article about a wrestler you'll ever read.

Remember, the contest is called "Wrestling Fan of the Month," not *"A Wrestler's Fan* of the Month." This contest is intended to honor a sport, not a particular participant.

So while we admire those who work long and selflessly on their favorite wrestler's fan magazine, that's not a qualification in this contest. Fan club workers are rightfully honored elsewhere.

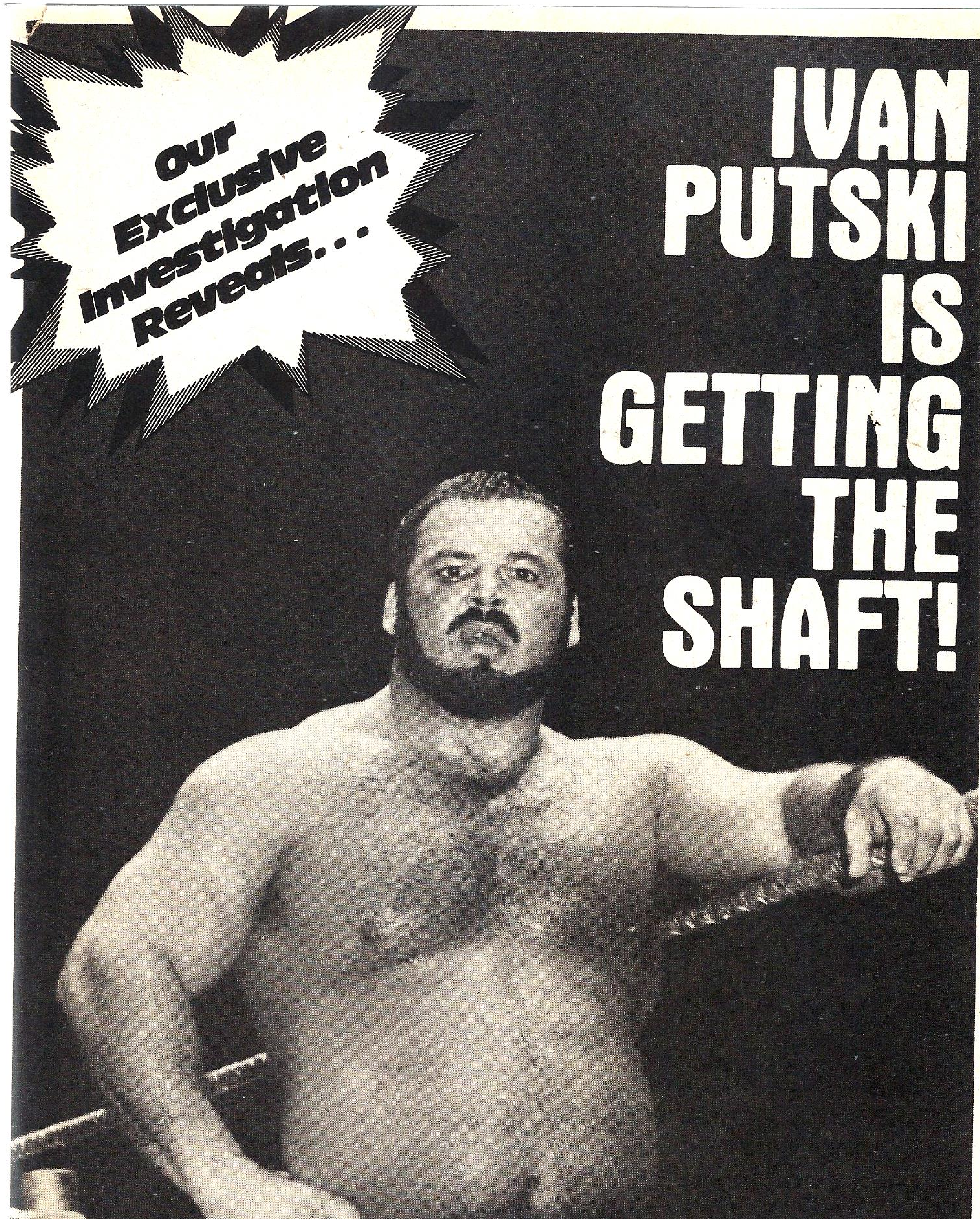
Without the fan, wrestling would wither and die. Because of the fans, wrestling has become the most popular sport in the world. It's about time the fans receive the recognition they deserve.

As soon as possible, send your photos and essays to:

TOP FAN CONTEST
c/o INSIDE WRESTLING
Box 38
Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

Our Exclusive Investigation Reveals...

IVAN PUTSKI IS GETTING THE SHAFT!



FANS ALL OVER the WWWF area long to hear, "Next month, Superstar Billy Graham will defend his title against Ivan Putski!" They may be waiting a long time for the announcement.

When Graham took the belt from Bruno Sammartino, saddened fans were heartened by the hope Ivan would get a title shot. For reasons known only to the commissioners, Ivan never got to wrestle Bruno for the title. Now, there seemed to be no reason for the Polish mat star not to get his chance at the big prize. His fans were sure once he got the chance, it would mean the championship.

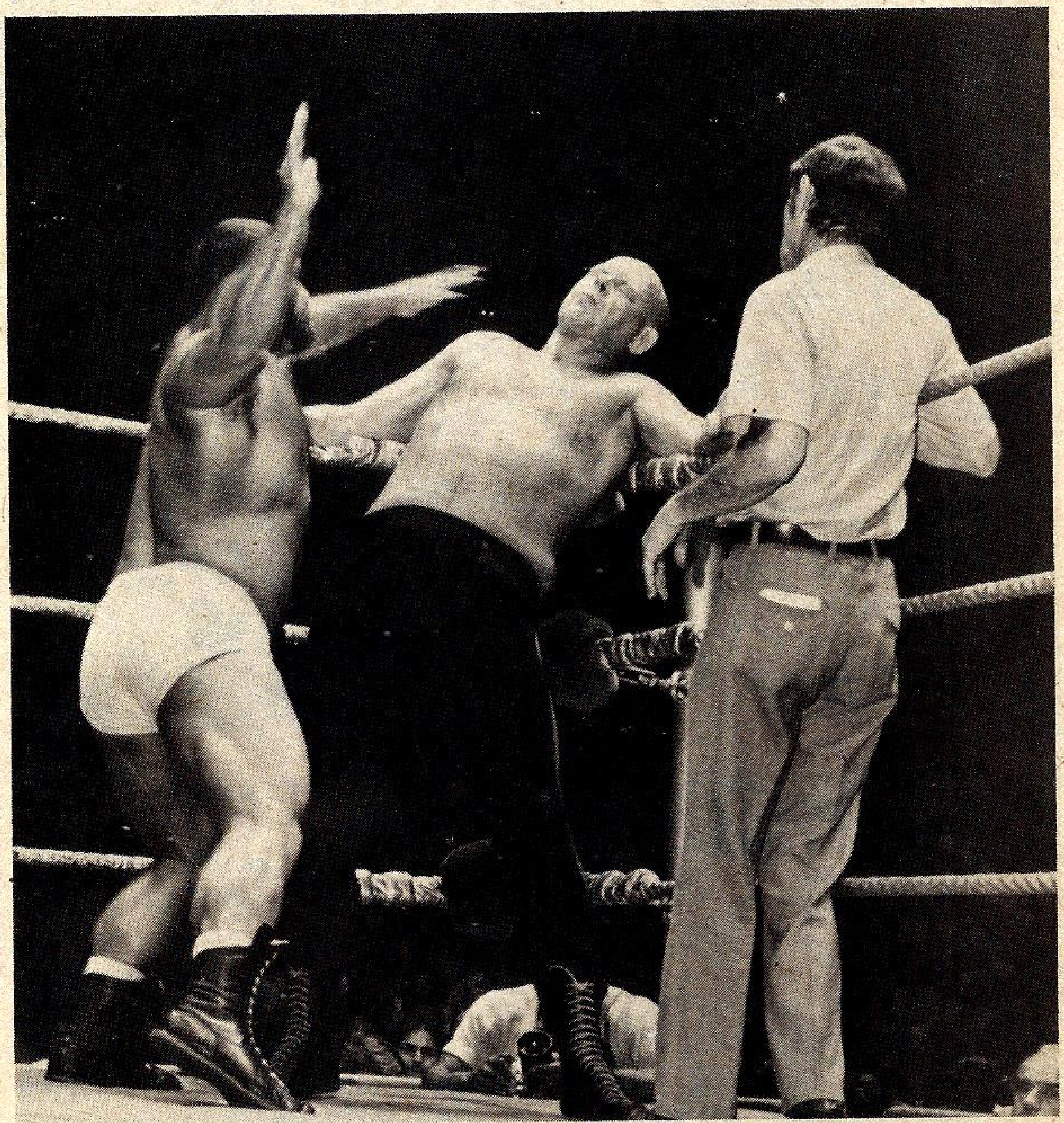
So the wait began. Graham wrestled a lot of men. More than a few had many title shots. Still Ivan waited for his chance. And waited. And waited.

Finally, the day arrived. Ivan had his title shot. The man prepared scrupulously. His complex strategies were refined to perfection. He almost lived in the gymnasium, practicing and practicing. He achieved a fluidity and grace few men can hope to enjoy.

The night of the match, Ivan stood tall and proud. From the opening bell, his maneuvers were perfect. Graham was immediately overwhelmed. The champion grew desperate. With an intricate series of maneuvers, Billy managed to defend himself for about five minutes. Then, realizing only a miracle could get him the victory, Graham had himself disqualified. Graham doesn't believe in miracles.

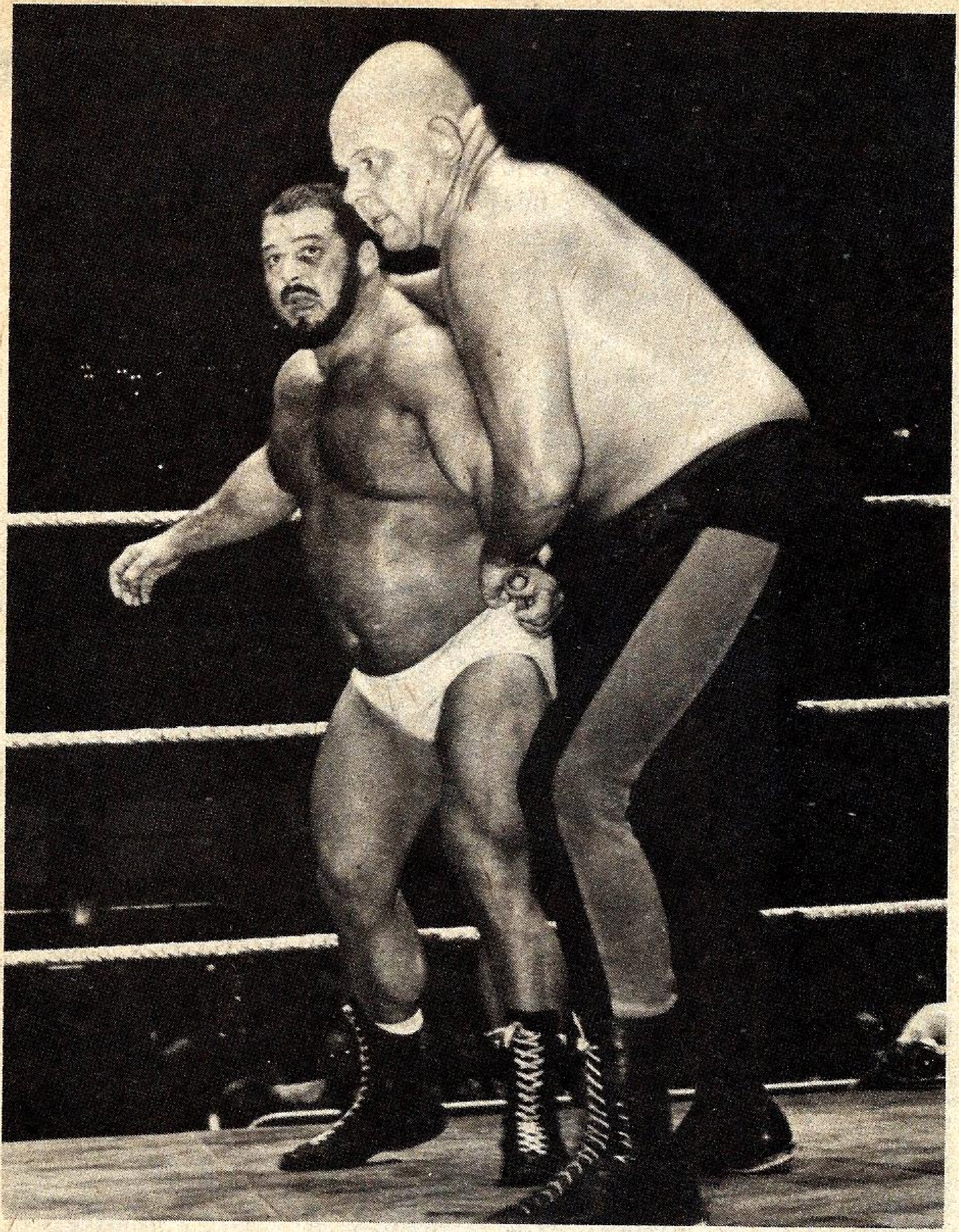
That was the only time Ivan Putski was ever allowed to wrestle Superstar Billy Graham. Tony Garea, Larry Zbyszko, and a few others have had many title shots. Graham has repulsed them time and time again. Though the challengers have been honorable, they don't own a monopoly on title shots. Putski earned another chance to win the championship. Why hasn't he gotten it?

There can be only one group to blame—the commissioners. When Bruno Sammartino was asked why he never wrestled scientific wrestlers, the ex-champion explained he had no say in the choice of his opponents. All matches were made by the commissioners. Now Bruno is an honorable man. If the commissioners won't extend the privilege of choosing opponents to Sammartino, they certainly won't do it for Graham. So Billy can't be

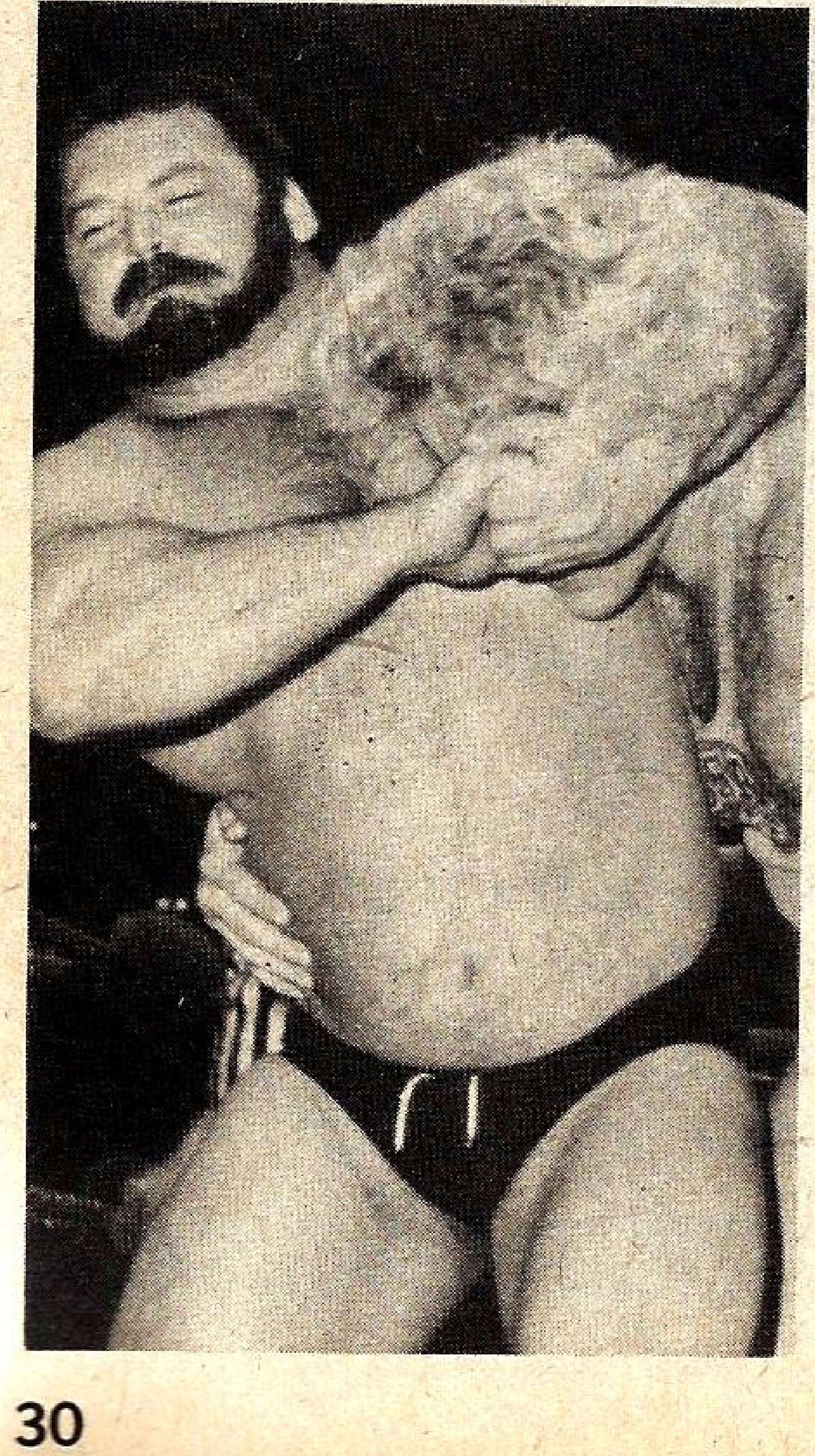


Ivan Putski obviously has Baron Von Raschke in a lot of trouble. Putski has had several tough opponents while waiting to take on the toughest of all—WWWF champion Superstar Billy Graham. But will they ever wrestle?

Why have some wrestlers been given many chances at Billy Graham's title while Ivan Putski has had but one controversial match? Fans of the Polish mat star are sure to be enraged by the findings of our intensive investigation



Von Raschke prepares to hurt Putski across the ring. Ivan was able to overcome this and win the match.



blamed for Ivan's inability to get a return match.

The situation has reached a fever pitch in the WWWF. The commissioners refuse to say anything about it, promising an official statement. They are now three weeks overdue with that explanation. Asked why it's taking so long for them to respond, one commissioner replied, "The situation keeps changing. When things calm down, we'll explain everything." What he fails to add is there is no way the situation can stop changing, unless they halt wrestling for a couple of months. So it's plain there will be no explanation for a long time, if ever.

Why do the commissioners avoid giving Putski a title shot. When others wrestlers are asked, there is no answer. Many don't kow. Those who might shed some light on the situation are afraid to publicly criticize the commissioners. After all, it would mean they would lose their title shots, also.

Only one person inside the profession was willing to talk about what is happening. He is a referee, known throughout the sport for his honesty and integrity. He has asked to remain anonymous.

"They don't want Putski to be champion. One title shot is the only opportunity Putski will ever get to be champion. They figured there had to be one title match for the guy. After all, next to Sammartino, Ivan is the number one contender.

"I don't know if the commissioners celebrated when Ivan didn't win the title, but I wouldn't be surprised. Let's face it, the guy is not the average athlete. There's something about Putski that scares commissioners. They can't understand a guy who'll risk his career to please the fans. They can't trust him because they don't understand him.

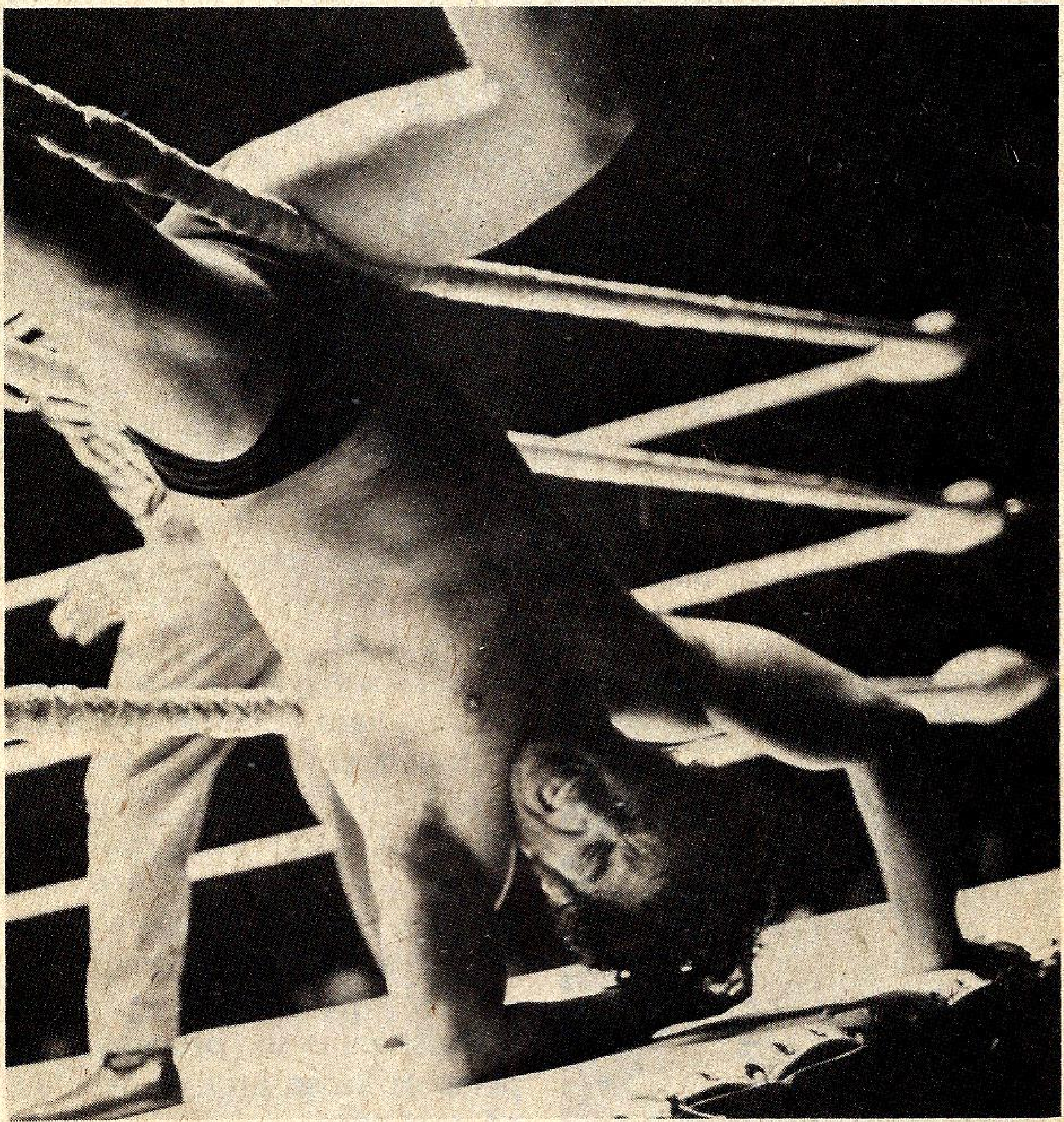
"What the commissioners fear is if Putski got the belt, it wouldn't change him. He'd still fly down to Texas if there was a rulebreaker who had to be stopped. Ivan takes too many risks. The title is a very valuable thing to the promoters. Do you realize how much money would be lost if Putski and the belt were stuck in a hospital for three months? All it would take is a broken leg.

"Fans could beg for Ivan to have another chance, but the promoters would say, 'He had his chance and failed.' They may not be too happy with Graham, but they're scared silly of Ivan.

"I like Ivan. More than that, I respect him. That's why I want the public to know what's going on. The man deserves another title shot. And if he gets it, I think he'll be champion. In my opinion, he's the best around."

Ivan may very well be the best wrestler alive today. Will he ever get the chance to prove it? Ask the commissioners. □

SOMEONE PLEASE SAVE JACK BRISCO'S CAREER

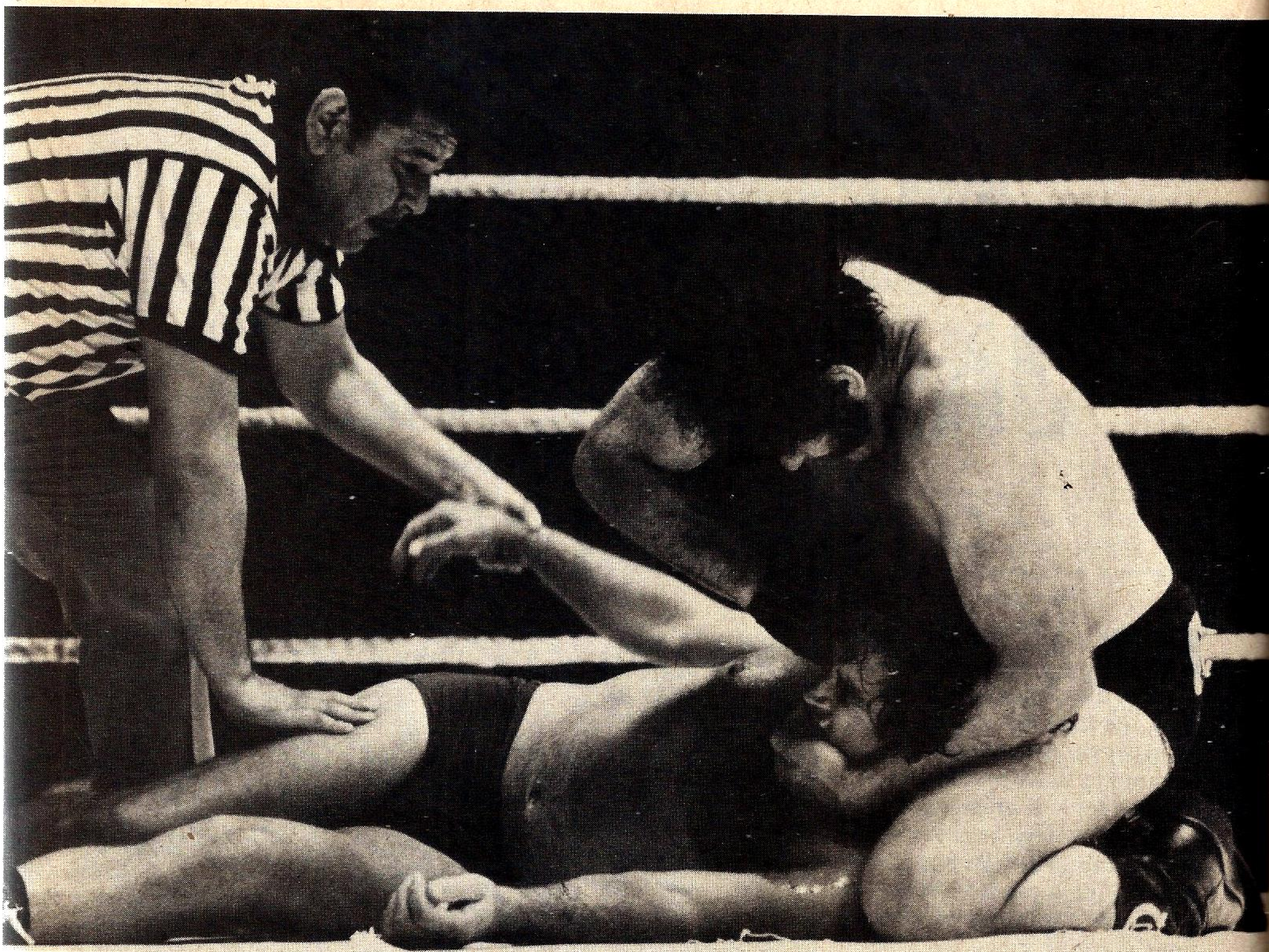


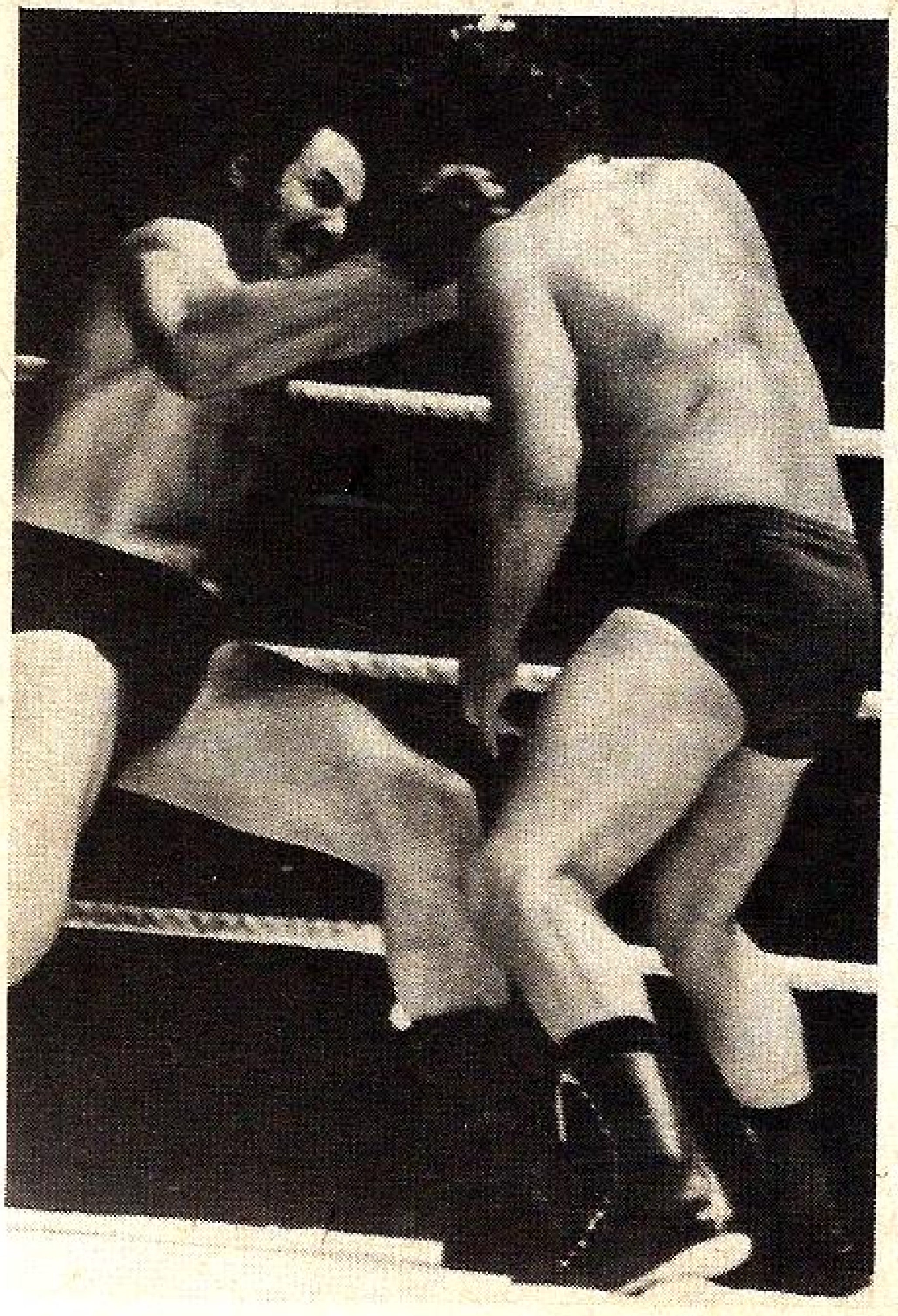
DUSK PAINTED THE landscae a pastel red. Traffic in both directions was sluggish with people returning home from work. In one car, a man was going to work. Jack Brisco headed for the wrestling arena.

The last few months have seen strange things happen to this complex man. For a while, friends and admirers felt he was only a match away from once again wearing the NWA belt. He seemed dedicated to regaining the title. Certainly all his energies were marshaled in that direction. When Harley Race won the NWA belt from Terry Funk, everyone assumed Jack would become champion almost immediately. After all, didn't Jack defeat Race the first time to win the belt?

It should have worked as everyone hoped it would. Wrestling could boast an honorable champion. Brisco would have proven his

When wrestling most needs his scientific skills and personal dignity, Jack Brisco seems to be floundering in confusion. Can anyone direct him back to the path of victory? Before answering, read this





In his match against Blackjack Lanza (above and below), Brisco was able to quiet the critics who complained that he was taking too much time in tag team competition with his brother.

greatness to the world, perhaps blazing new trails for the sport. But things don't always happen for the best.

Just when it seemed all would be well, Jack became obsessed with perfecting a tag team with his brother, Jerry. Friends implored Jack to forget the team and concentrate on winning the title. Brisco angrily went his own way, sometimes destroying long-standing friendships in the process. The pleas of those around him fell on deaf ears.

This night, Jack headed for the arena alone. The promoter had made him an offer he couldn't refuse. Blackjack Lanza would be his opponent. The former champion didn't especially want the match, but the money was good and the criticism stung. So to quiet those who demanded he wrestle in a solo match, Brisco found himself speeding toward the wrestling arena.

When asked before the match how he prepared for the oncoming battle, "I deposited the money in the bank." His tone of voice didn't invite laughter.

Yet, his actions in combat proved differently. The man had clearly worked long hours perfectng maneuvers and strategies. Still, there was something wrong. Brisco lacked the desire for victory. Advantages were passed up time and time again. It came as no surprise when the match ended in a draw. It was as if

Brisco willfully decided not to prove his superiority.

When the match ended, fans were confused. Even Lanza betrayed his wonder at what happened. Brisco failed to acknowledge anyone in the crowd as he strode back to the dressing room. It seemed he wanted nothing but distance between himself and the arena.

Those who thought the match was some strange occurrence were in for a shock. Now, whenever Brisco wrestles by himself, the same thing occurs. He seems more interested in executing separate maneuvers than in winning a match. It's as if his opponent was nothing more than a practice dummy.

What happened to the competitive spark that ignited Brisco to win the NWA title? What, if anything, extinguished it? Those are questions everyone seems to be asking. A few people have theories.

"He was never really interested in winning," Blackjack Lanza believes. "He was probably more surprised than anyone when he became champion. Brisco is one of those fancy boys who thinks it's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game. The man never had any grit. He defended his title because that's the proper thing to do. But he was never hungry for the belt. Never meant much to him. It sure doesn't mean anything to him now."

Not everyone agrees with that. Paul Jones thinks Brisco's time to regain the title is near.

"If I don't take the belt," Paul declares, "then I think it will go to Brisco. Don't let anyone tell you he doesn't want it. He'd sacrifice every member of his family to get it.

"What he's doing now is practicing. Except for Race, he doesn't care about being victorious over anybody. He's methodically perfecting all his moves, waiting for the moment when Race is his opponent. The man is using every wrestler in the NWA as his sparring partners. When the belt is on the line, watch the change in Brisco.

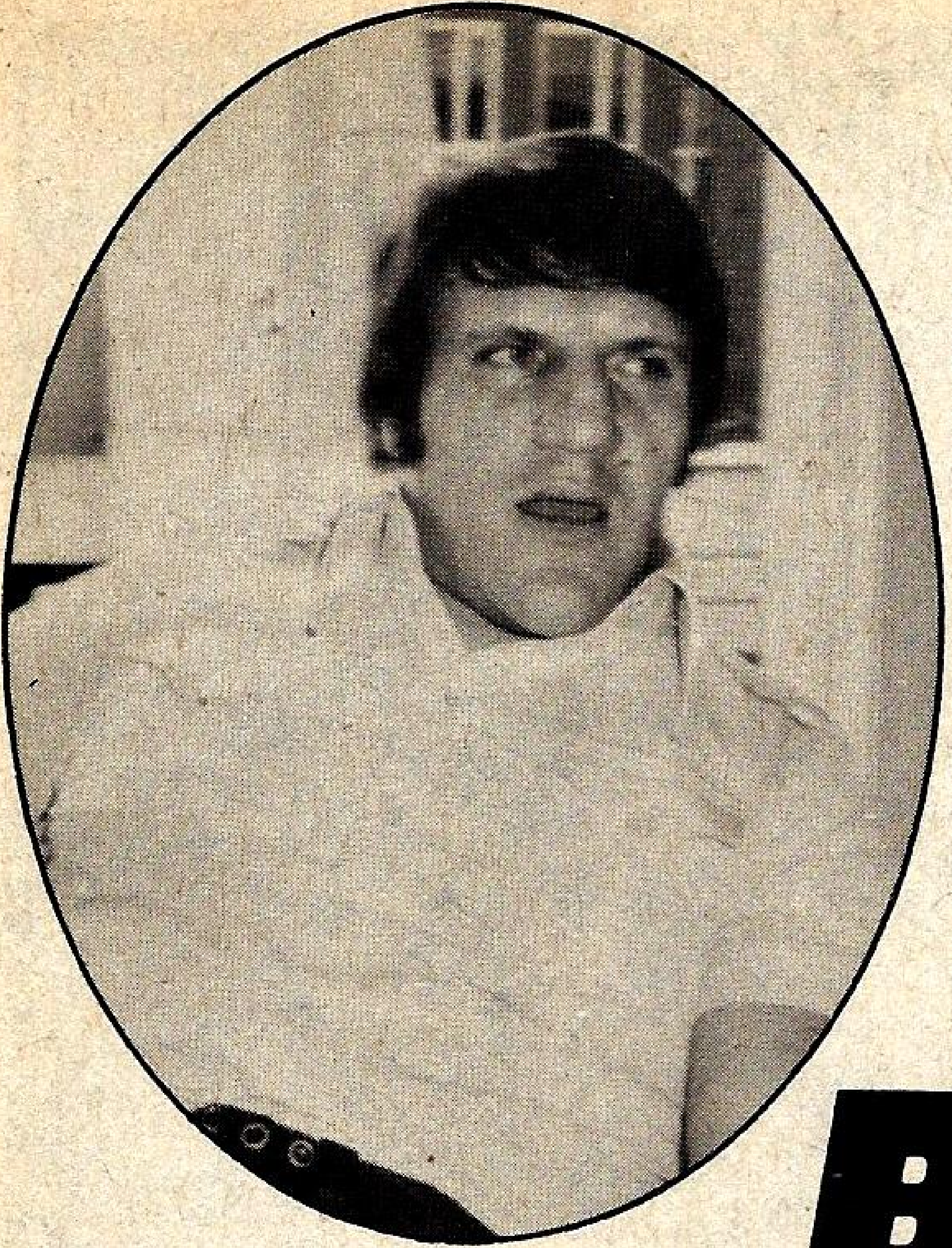
"He's just waiting for the right moment. All the other stuff is meaningless."

Many people hope Jones is right. Yet, Paul's theory seems just too pat to be true. One can't get over the nagging feeling something is definitely wrong with Jack, something terrible.

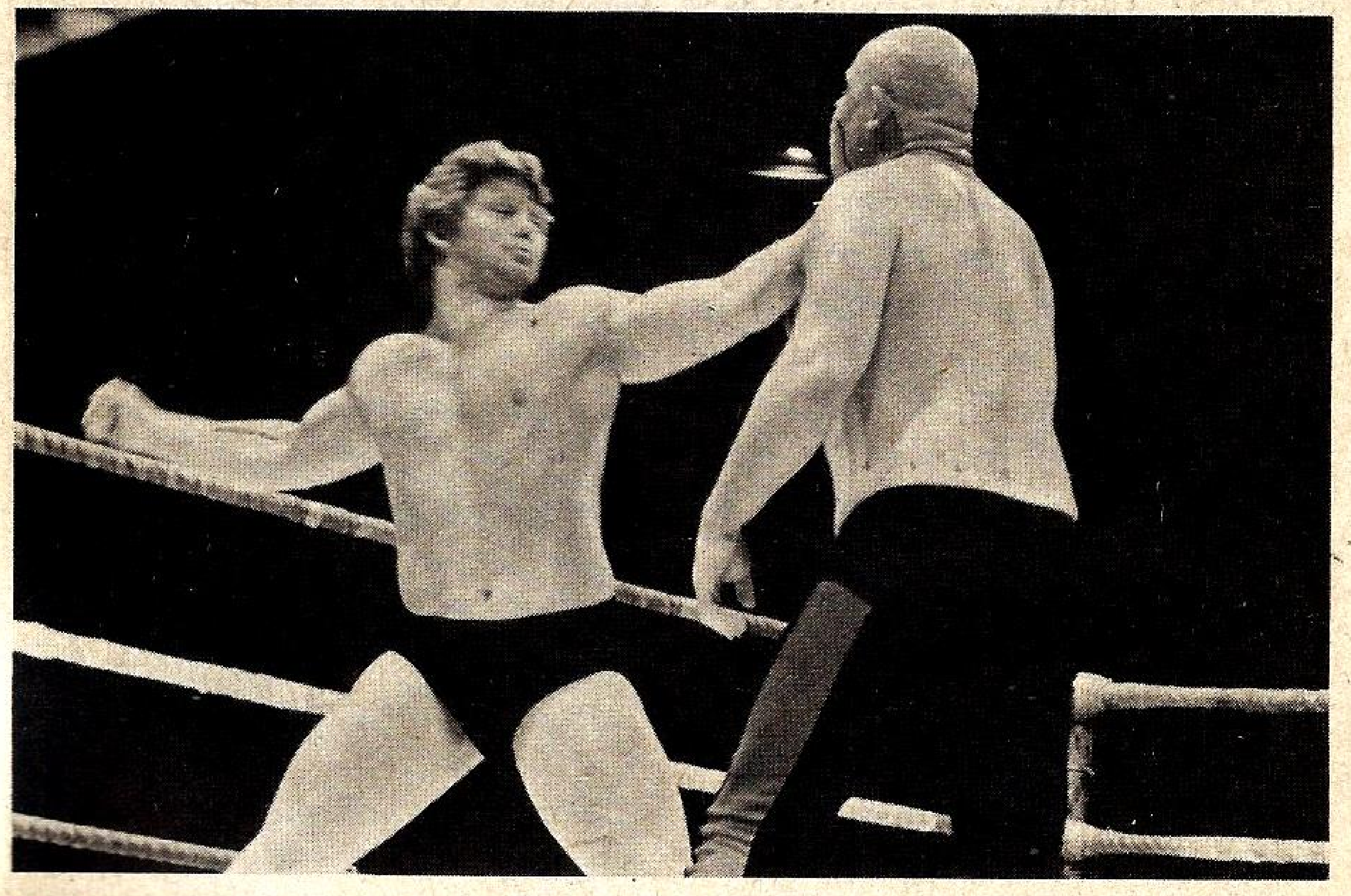
Perhaps those closest to Jack can help him. Hopefully there is a person who can motivate the man to once again be the glorious warrior fans remember and love. That savior would be doing more than just helping Jack. Never has wrestling more needed a champ the fans can respect. The very existence of the sport may rest on Brisco's shoulders.

Maybe Jack realizes that. And maybe he's just waiting for the right moment to lift this awesome burden. We can always hope. □

Blackjack Lanza tries to bring Jack down, but he will not succeed. Brisco had little trouble winning this match, though his heart wasn't really in it. Many of his fellow wrestlers feel Jack is just waiting for the time when he will take the NWA belt from Harley Race again.



Now Even Bruno Predicts: "BOBBY BACKLUND IS THE NEXT WWWF CHAMPION!



Even the always-tough Baron Von Raschke can't stand the pressure when he battles Bob Backlund. The young mat star made quick work out of the vicious wrestler. This is a typical event in a Backlund match.

IT IS THE home of a successful man. Everything has its place. There is nothing more to do but enjoy the fruits of this existence. Welcome to the estate of Bruno Sammartino.

In the comfortable study, Bruno receives guests. The light brown wood paneling invites informality. A baseball mitt lying on a chair shows children frequent the room. Bruno calls his son to retrieve the mitt and the guest is seated. Coffee, rich and dark, is brought by the pot. One immediately realizes any length visit will seem too short.

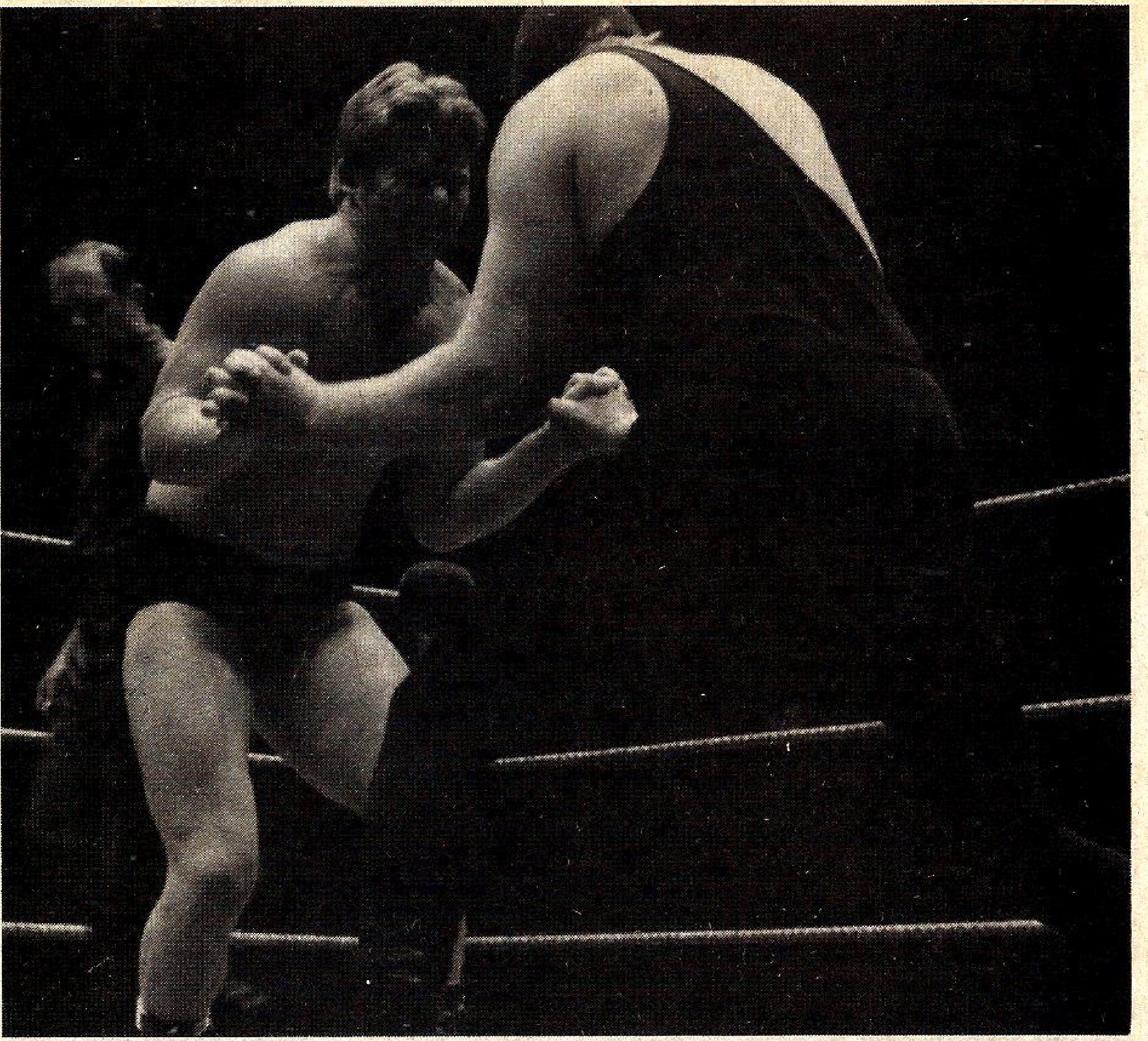
The interview concerns Bruno's predictions for the future of wrestling. Sammartino might figure prominently in that future or he might bow out gracefully. He doesn't know. His career has been arduous and satisfying. There are no more quests. There is no necessity driving him to regain the title.

"If I had to pick the next champion," Bruno says after a while, "Bob Backlund would be my choice. Now, there are a lot of guys who could take the title. Graham could be had. But if I had to choose the guy most likely to take the title, it would be Backlund."

There are certain parallels between young Sammartino and Backlund not lost on the ex-champion.

"Yeah, I guess a young scientific wrestler would have my hopes riding with him. I remember when the title became mine for the first time. Bruno Sammartino, WWWF champion. A young man who just earns the belt brings something to the sport no veteran can. Maybe my desires are clouding my judgement. But going over the situation fact for fact, Backlund seems to be the man.

"Graham is never going to be defeated by a man who depends mostly on strength. It will have to be a strong man who is also agile. Backlund seems to have those qualifications.



In a battle of strength against the Executioner, Backlund will be the winner in the end. Bob prefers to rely more upon skills than brute strength to win his matches, a technique he learned in his championship amateur days.

It isn't easy for Bruno Sammartino to say someone else will be the next WWWF champion. Still, the legendary wrestler has always called it like he sees it. In this exclusive interview, Bruno reveals why he feels Bob Backlund is the next WWWF king

"He's also smart. It's going to take a great deal of intelligence to beat Graham. Many people don't realize how cunning Graham can be. When the chips are down, Billy's mind is razor sharp. He doesn't make stupid mistakes. In fact, he often maneuvers opponents into making mistakes. Backlund is one of the few guys around who can outsmart Graham. The match will be decided by brains, not brawn. Nothing is ever decided on brawn alone."

If anyone knows what Backlund is going through at this point in his life, Bruno is the man. He too was a young man who found to his delight being champion was within reach. This is an exclusive fraternity to

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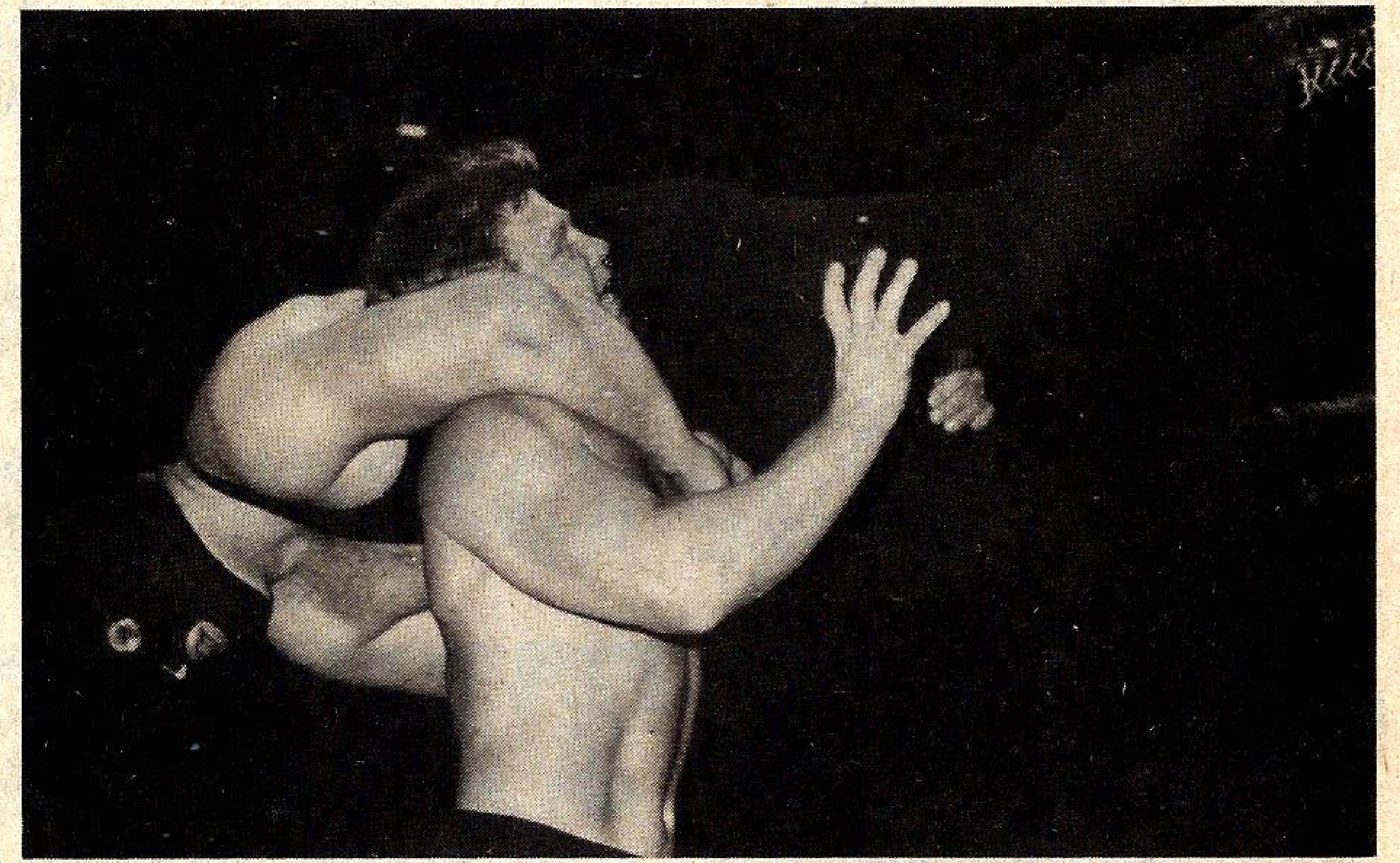


It is clear that Backlund has his opponent in a lot of trouble. A few seconds after this picture was taken, Bob went on to defeat the Executioner.

Andre & Strongbow:

ONLY THEIR GREA CAN CONQUER TH

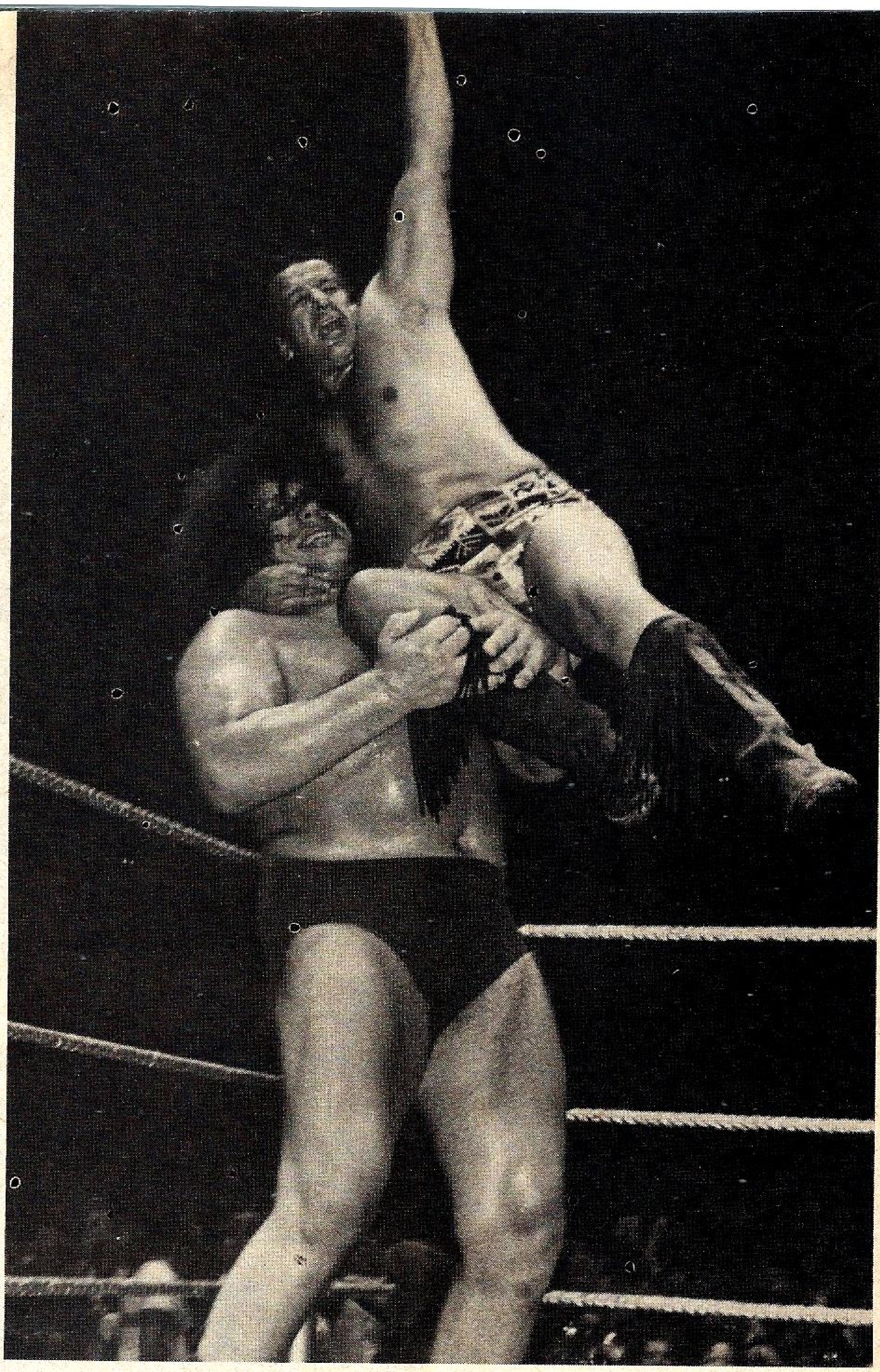
FILE CARDS, FILM CANS, reports, and photos littered Andre the Giant's desk. Represented in this collection was every great wrestler in the world. It didn't matter if the man wrestled scienticaly or if he was a rulebreaker. Andre wanted to evaluate him.

Days and nights passed as the grappler compared and wondered. At the end of three weeks, there were over 50 wrestlers still under consideration. By the month's end, 37 still remained in contention.

Andre arrived at the point where three movie projectors were running at the same time, so the grapplers could be compared side by side. Each film was scrupulously examined to see if one would contain the magic ingredient, a power Andre might not be able to identity even it existed.

After all was said and done, one wrestler stood above the others. In most categories, his special skills seemed to be the answer. Chief Jay Strongbow would be the best tag team partner Andre the Giant could want.

Once the decision was made, Andre sat back and considered what had to be done. He and Jay had already been tag team partners. There had been some success, but neither man was willing to devote the necessary time to perfecting their duo. Also, Strongbow, like so many others, wasn't all that thrilled with Andre as a partner.



Everyone cheered when Andre teamed up with Chief Jay Strongbow. However, it may be too soon to cheer for the team. They may have some troubled days ahead.

The only field Andre the Giant has yet to conquer is tag team wrestling. For some reason, the grappling gargantuan has failed time and again to master the competition. Only one man can help him realize his dream. And that wrestler—Chief Jay Stongbow—has every reason to be afraid of the challenge

It's hard for a loner to be good in a tag team. Andre has been a loner all his life. In most tag team matches, Andre forgets he has a partner, rarely tagging out at the proper times or showing any other signs of teamwork. This has infuriated some of the most respected men in wrestling. Most grapplers hesitate to have Andre as a tag team partner.

Andre has tried time and time again to fit himself into a tag team. Yet, something deep inside him prevents this from ever happening. He needs a partner not only physically suited to his needs, but who will support him emotionally as well. If any man can make Andre into a tag team partner, it's Strongbow.

What Andre didn't know is that Strongbow is also having his difficulties as a tag team partner. It gets harder and harder for him to mentally prepare himself for a match. The knowledge he has never won a major single title keeps eating away at the man's mind. Tag team wrestling seems to be wasting time better spent pursuing a world title.

Late at night, alone in the blackness, Strongbow wonders what would have happened if he hadn't spent so much time in tag teams.

So when Andre approached Strongbow to start a tag team, Jay grew suddenly weary from the thought of what it would take. The days of practice seemed to stretch out endlessly. And the result might be a

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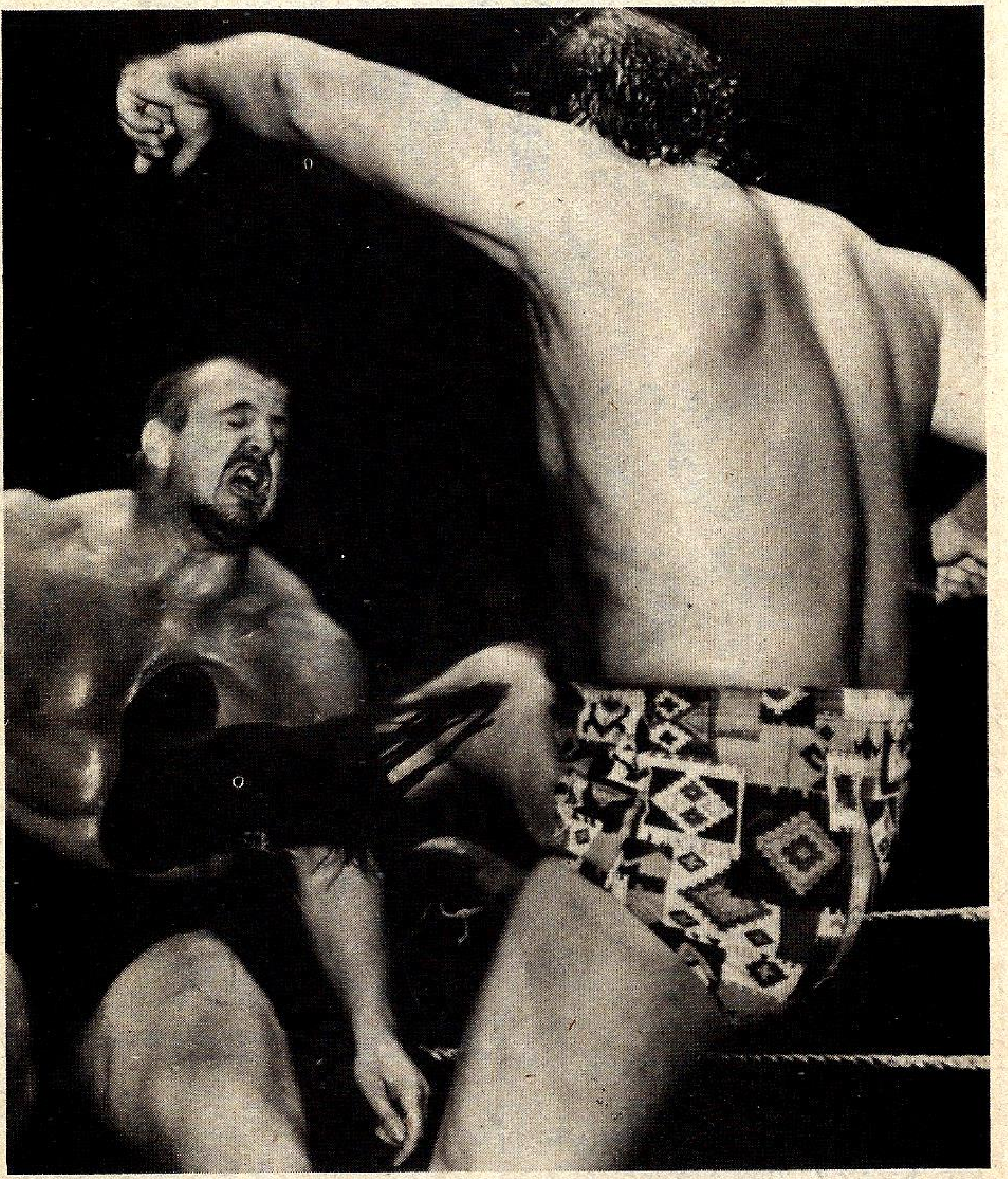
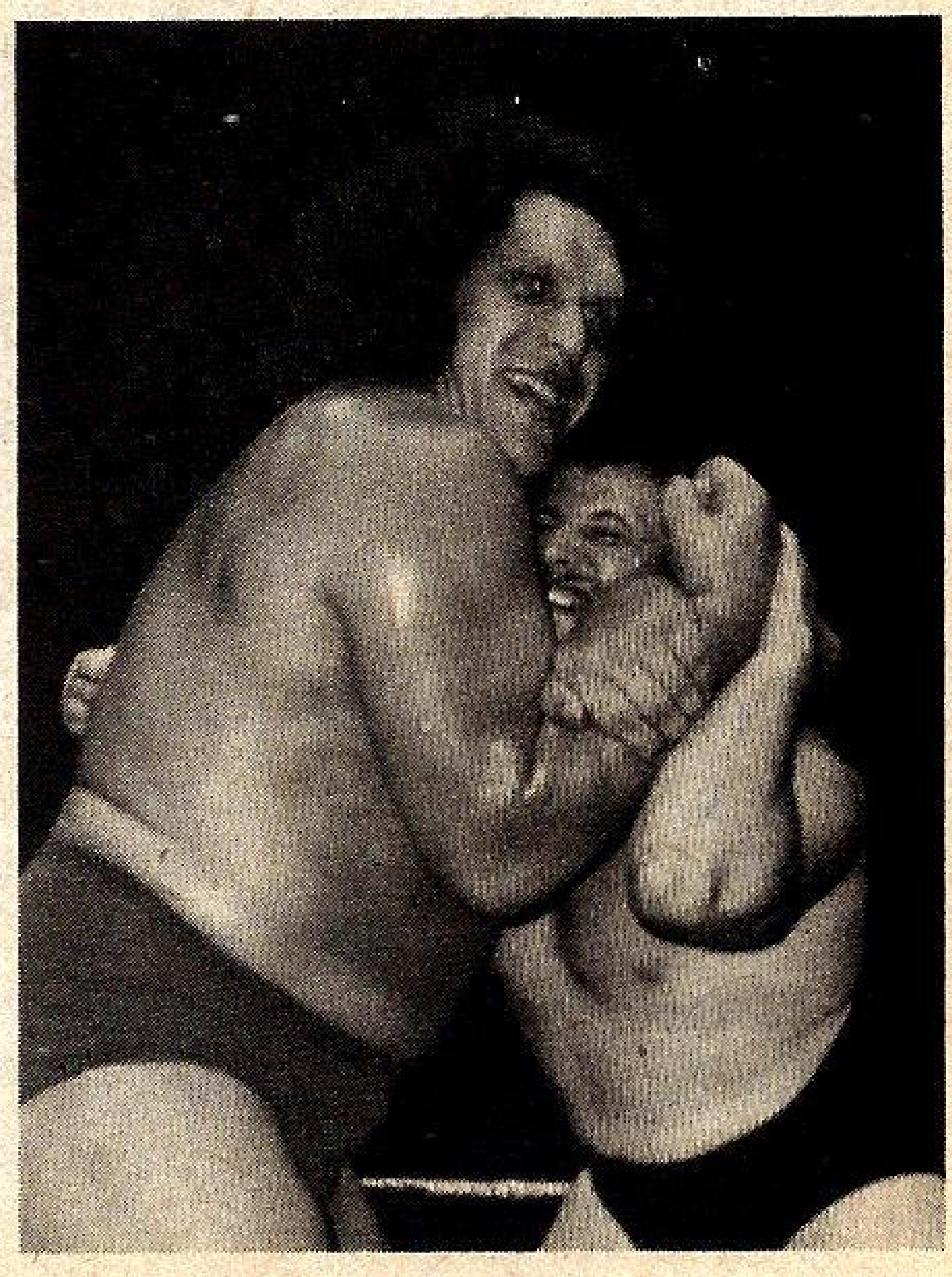


Nikolai Volkoff never had a chance. If Strongbow wasn't enough (above), he also had to contend with Andre (below).



HOTSEAT

DUSTY RHODES: "I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO PROVE!"

HE IS OFTEN called "The American Dream." At one time he was one of the most hated and feared men in the sport. With a change of attitude and tactics, he quickly became a fan favorite. He has become loved far beyond anyone's expectations. He breaks box office records wherever he wrestles. His main goal is the NWA title held by Harley Race. This is his second time on the hotseat—an honor only few wrestlers have enjoyed. He is Dusty Rhodes.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BILL APTER

> "I have the greatest fans in the world. They came to me and said, 'Dream, don't give up. We need you. We are behind you all the way.' That is all I had to hear."

Q: Welcome back to the Hotseat, Dusty.

A: I am glad to be here again.

Q: Let's get right down to business, Dusty. A few months ago you were in a slump. You even expressed the fear that you might never win the NWA title. Do you still feel that way?

A: No way! That thing only lasted a day or two. I was feeling down, I was upset.

Q: Why?

A: I had just wrestled Harley Race the night before I said those things. I had the man whipped! I had him beat. And do you know what that bum did?

Q: What?

A: He had himself disqualified! The title went right down the toilet. I was down. I was upset. But that is over now.

Q: What changed your mind?

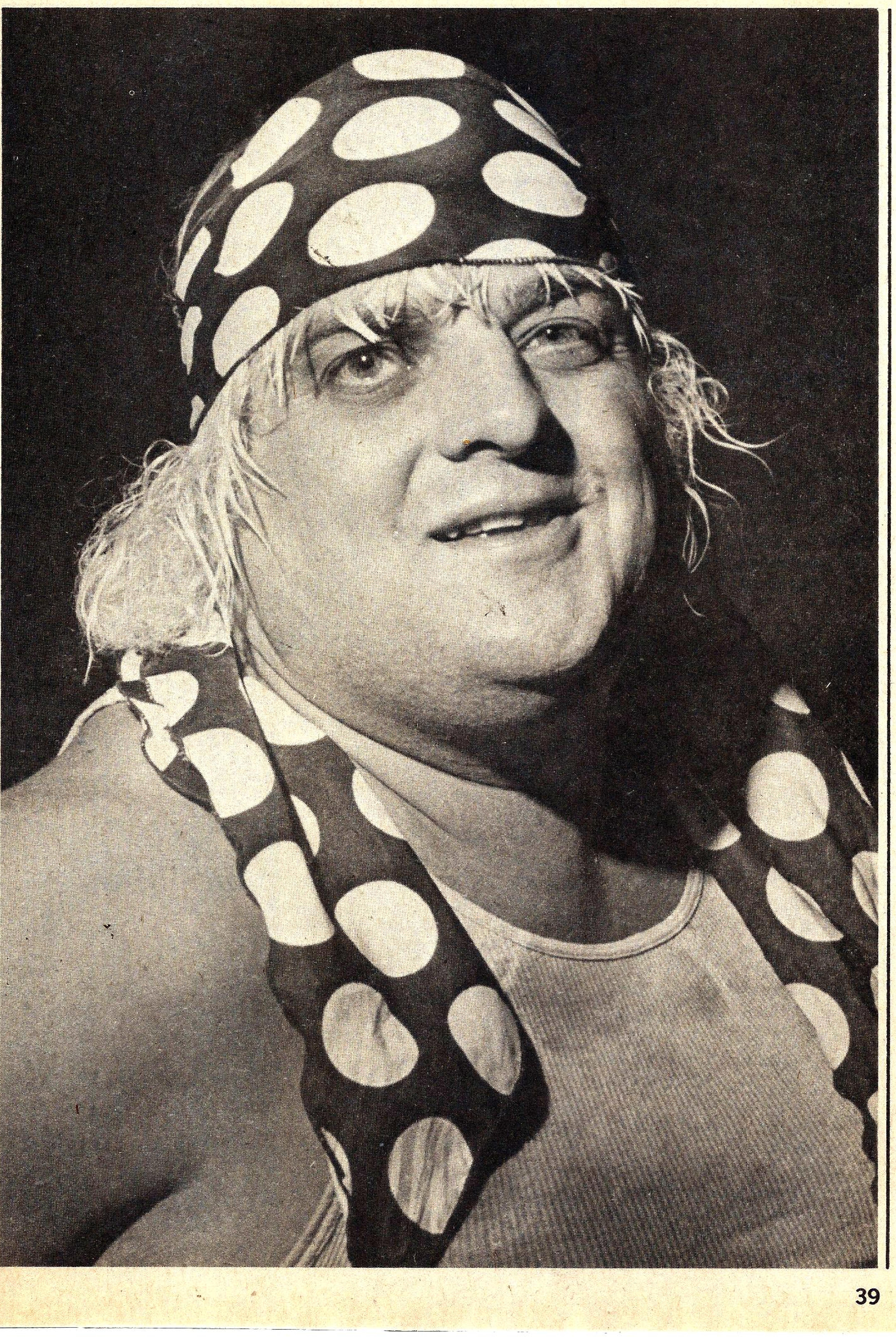
A: My fans. I have the greatest fans in the world. They came to me and said, "Dream, don't give up. We need you, Dream. We are behind you all the way. Get that title for us! That is all I had to hear.

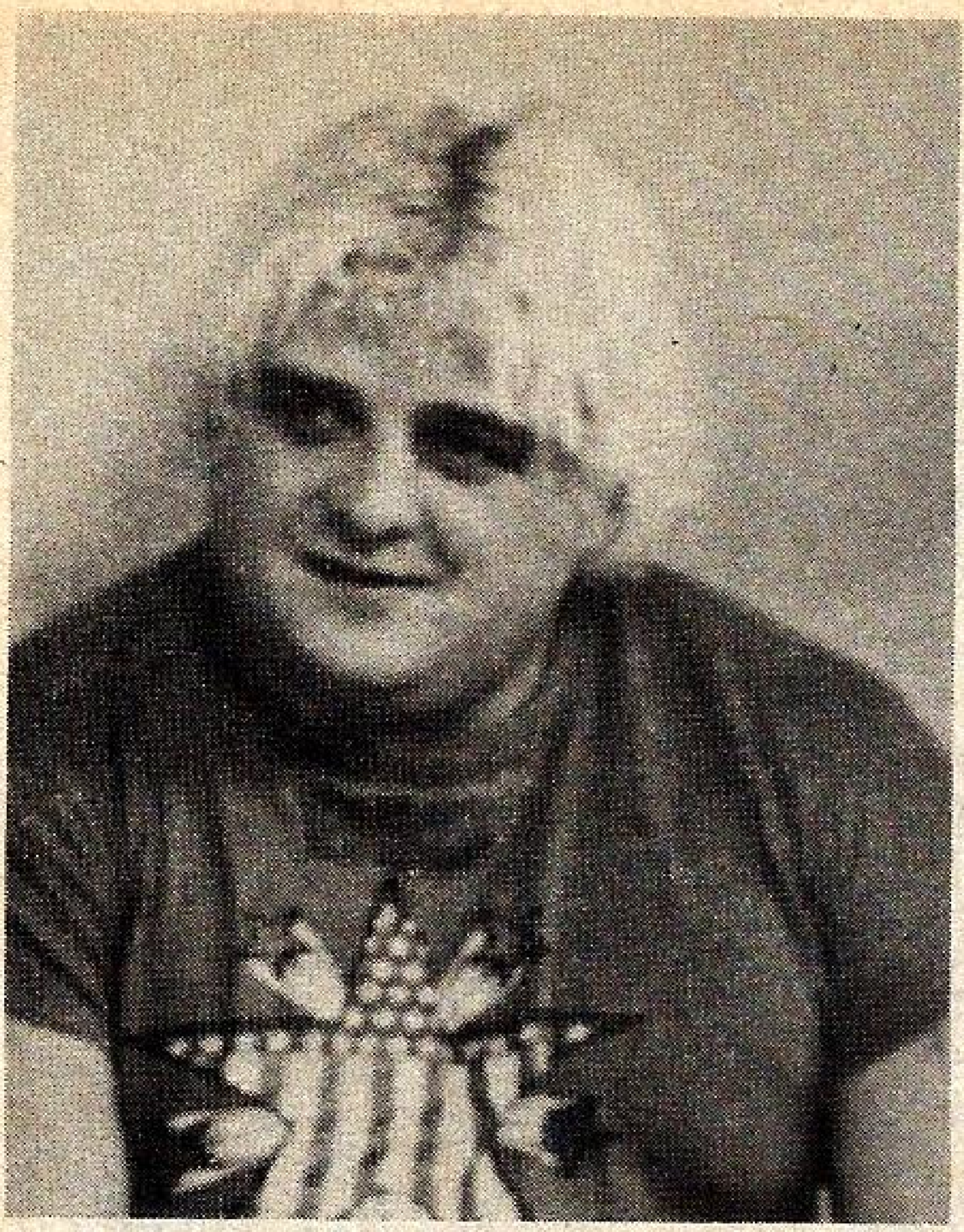
Q: Was that the first time you were in a slump?

A: No, it happened once while Terry Funk was champion. But let me clear one thing up. I was in a mental slump. I did not lose matches. The Dream doesn't lose. I am the greatest!

Q: Then why didn't you win the title from Funk?

A: Technicalities. Funk was another guy who was always getting himself disqualified. They have to get rid of that rule. A champion should not be allowed to hang onto the belt when he purposely gets





“If I do win the title, and get disqualified, I will give up the belt. I would not want my fans to think they are backing a man who would do something they would not approve of.”

disqualified. That rule has cost me the NWA belt at least a dozen times.

Q: If you became champion and were losing a match—your title hanging by a string—wouldn't you try to get disqualified?

A: I would have to say no at this time.

Q: But what if you became champion?

A: I can't answer that until I do become champion. Circumstances change. Look at that great man and friend of mine, Jack Brisco. Jack is a fair man. He is a great wrestler. I am willing to bet he saved his title by the disqualification rule a few times.

Q: I am not satisfied with the answer Dusty.

A: Okay. I will go one step further and make a promise. If I do win the title, and get disqualified, I will give up the belt. Does that meet with your approval?

Q: What made you say that?

A: Because I would not want my fans to think they were backing a man who would do something they would not approve of. My fans are my main people. Without them I am just another wrestler. I love my fans, and I owe them everything.

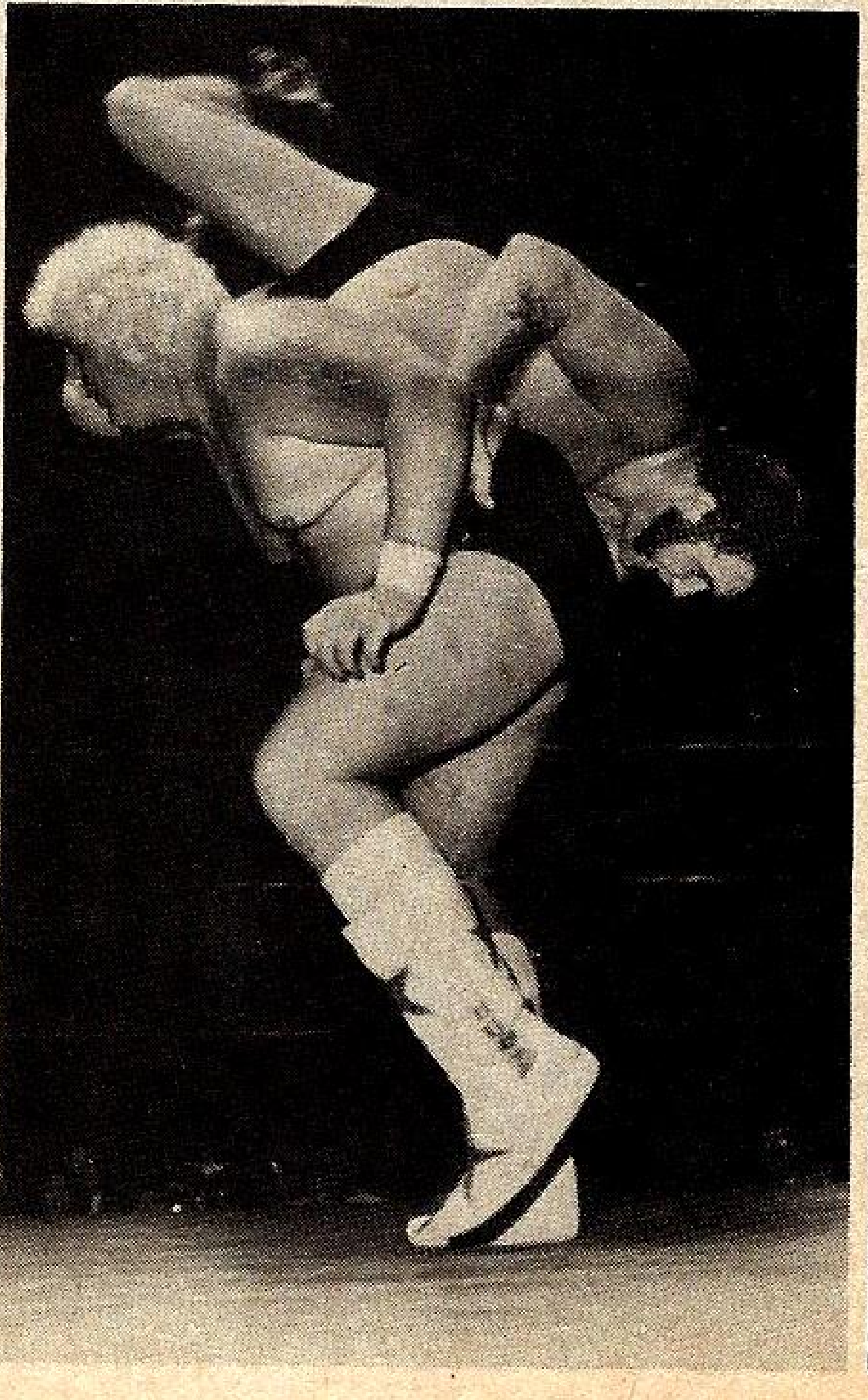
Q: If you win the title, will that be your final goal?

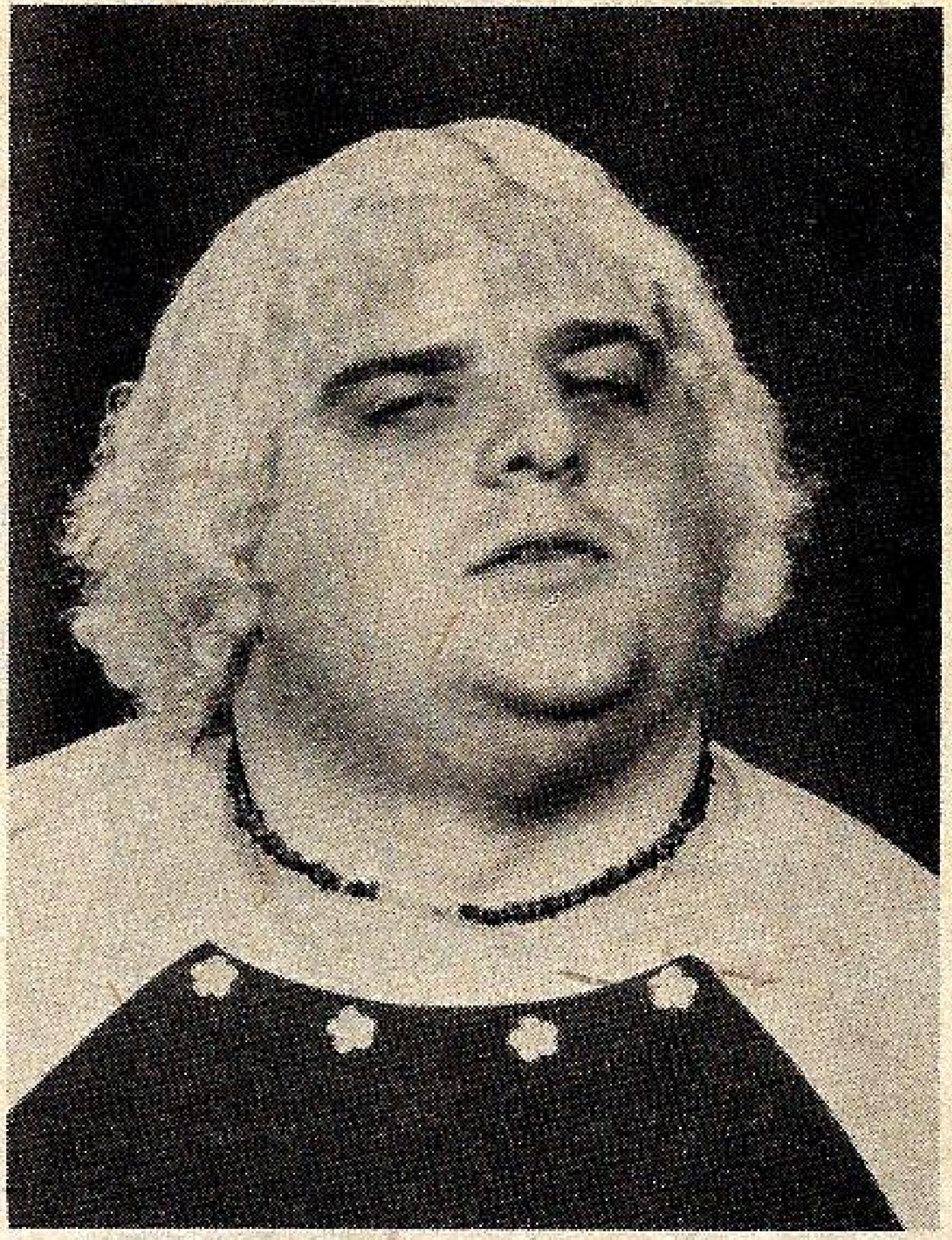
A: No. A man never stops trying to achieve goals. Let me put it this way: I have beaten some of the greatest men in the sport. I feel I have nothing more to prove.

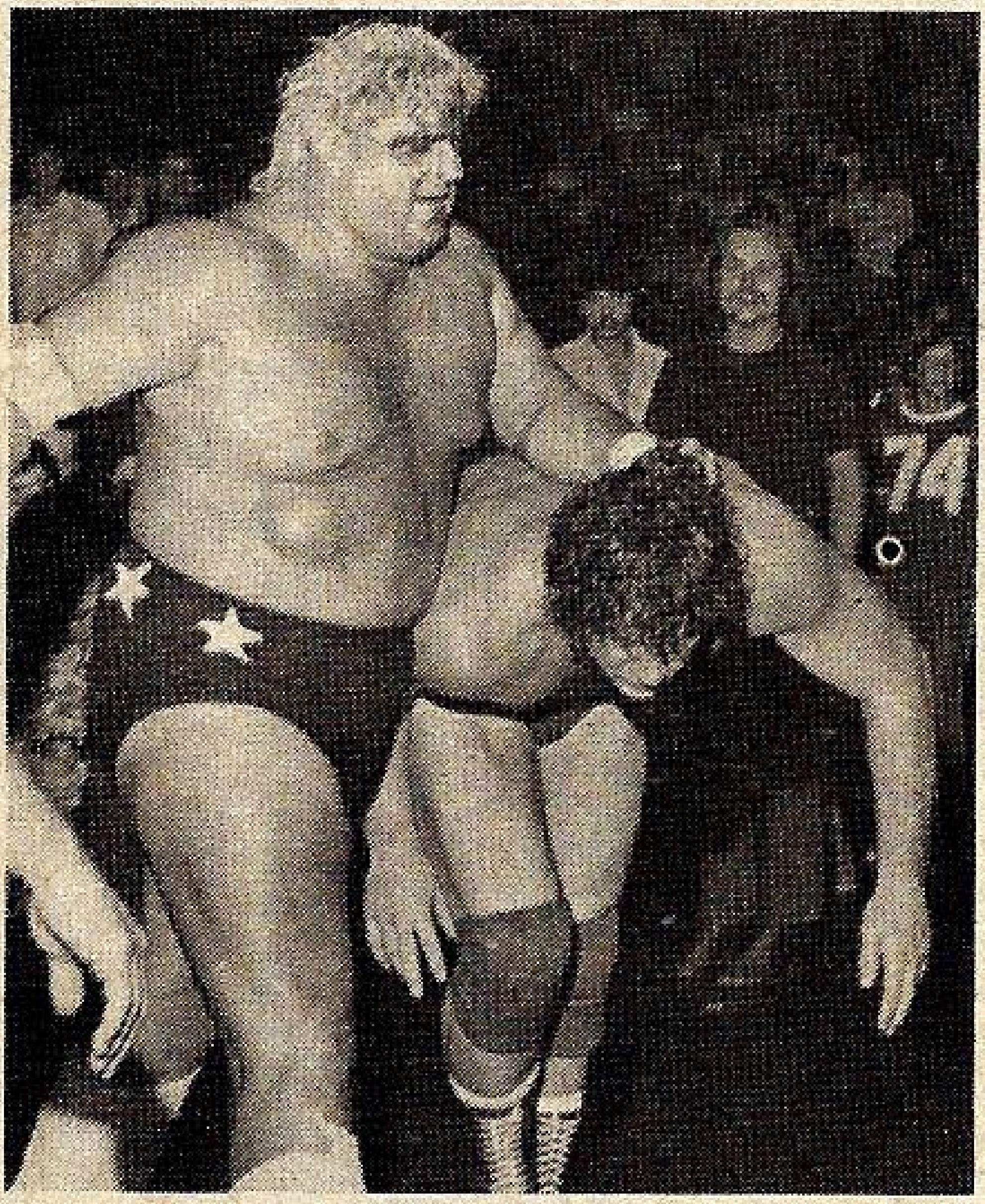
Q: Then why do you want the title?

A: I want to bring honor to the belt. Men like Harley Race, Terry Funk, and their kind have brought shame to the belt. We have not had an honorable champion since my

Above: In a strap match against Superstar Billy Graham, Dusty has the WWWF champion almost senseless. Below: Harley Race goes crashing to the canvas after being flipped by Dusty. Rhodes came very close to taking Race's NWA belt.







Above: Dusty wades through the crowd after winning an important victory. He is truly the people's champion. Left: A bloody battle against Terry Funk spills out of the ring.

> **"I get on the bandwagon about myself all the time. I would not call that an ego trip. I am just creating good vibes between me and my ever-lovin' public."**

good buddy, Jack Brisco, held the belt."

Q: But you mention that Jack may have saved his title by disqualification.

A: If you look at the record you will realize I am talking about men who have done the same against him. He only did it against men like Dory Funk, a man who used that trick regularly. If he did it in any other situations, he was justified. Jack Brisco is a good man. He must have had a good reason. But I am not here to defend Jack Brisco. I am here to talk about me!

Q: Do you think you have a big ego Dusty?

A: Not really. I get on the bandwagon about myself all the time. I would not call that an ego trip. I am just creating vibes—good vibes—between me and my ever lovin' public.

Q: Ernie Ladd claims it was your ego that caused the fallout between you two.

A: Ernie Ladd is nuts.

Q: He said you refused to tag him in a match in which you were his partner—when he was in big trouble. He also went on to say you were too busy signing autographs at the time!

A: What a liar. Let me tell you the real story, how it really happened.

Q: Go right ahead.

A: Ivan Koloff and Buddy Wolff had just beaten me. I was laying outside the ring, on the cement floor, bleeding, when Ladd tried to tag me. Ladd even saw films of this incident and refuses to admit it. He claims the cameraman used trick photography and that I was in the audience signing autographs when he tried to tag me. He is lying!

Q: Let's talk about Superstar Graham . . .

A: You mean Superchicken! Yeah, that is one guy whose butt I want to kick real bad. It is a shame that the good people in the WWWF area have this turkey for a champion. He doesn't deserve to follow in Bruno Sammartino's footsteps. No way, daddy! I want to whup him for that belt. I got a lot of whupping to do on that creep!

Q: Okay, Dusty. We'd like to thank you for being on the Hotseat again.

A: Anytime, my man, anytime! □

INSIDE WRESTLING'S

OFFICIAL RATINGS

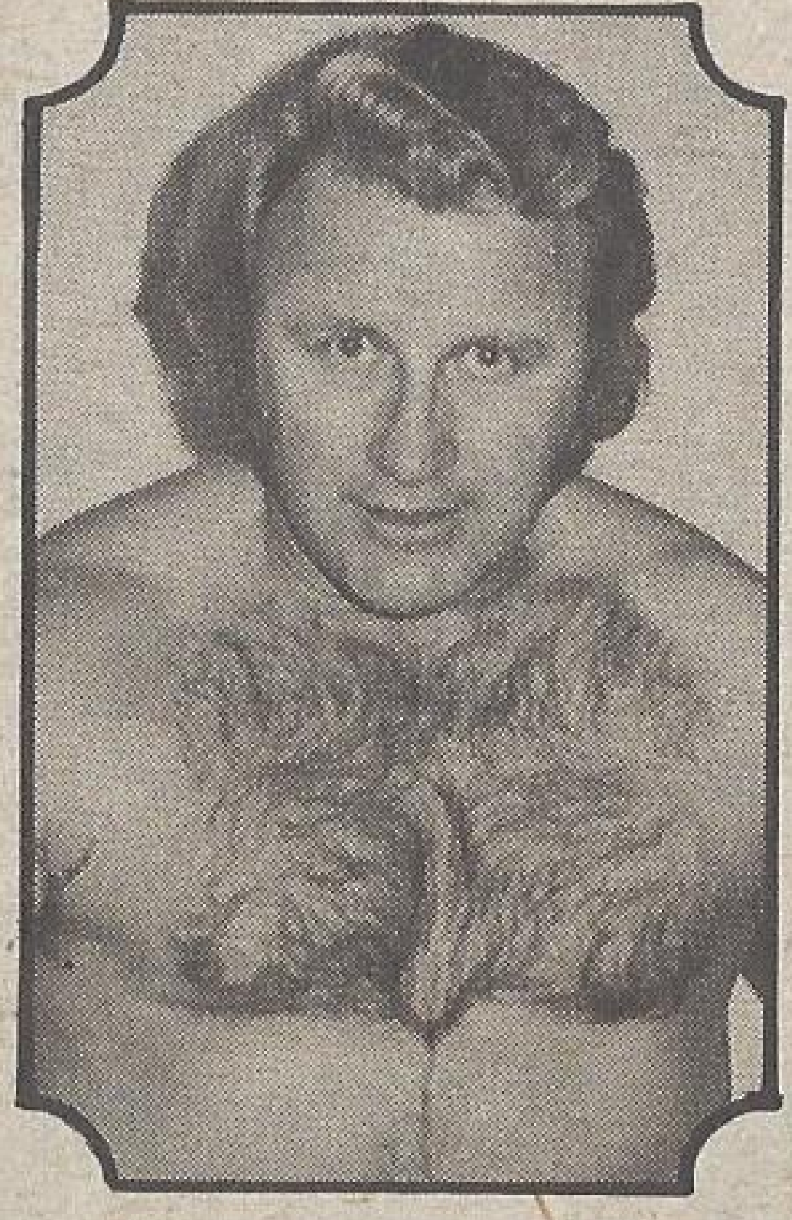
These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters, And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official

World Wide Wrestling Federation

Champion: SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

1—BRUNO SAMMARTINO

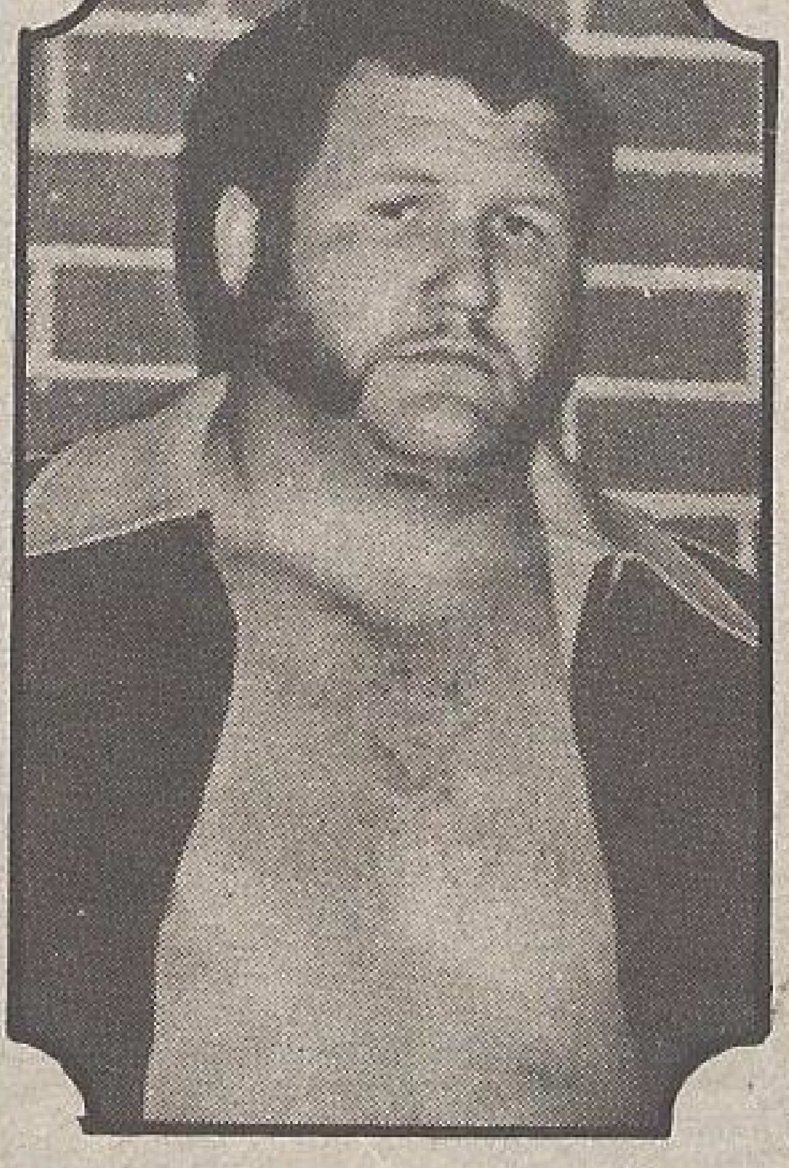
American Wrestling Association



Champion: NICK BOCKWINKLE

1—GREG GAGNE

National Wrestling Alliance



Champion: HARLEY RACE

1—DUSTY RHODES

Most Popular Wrestlers

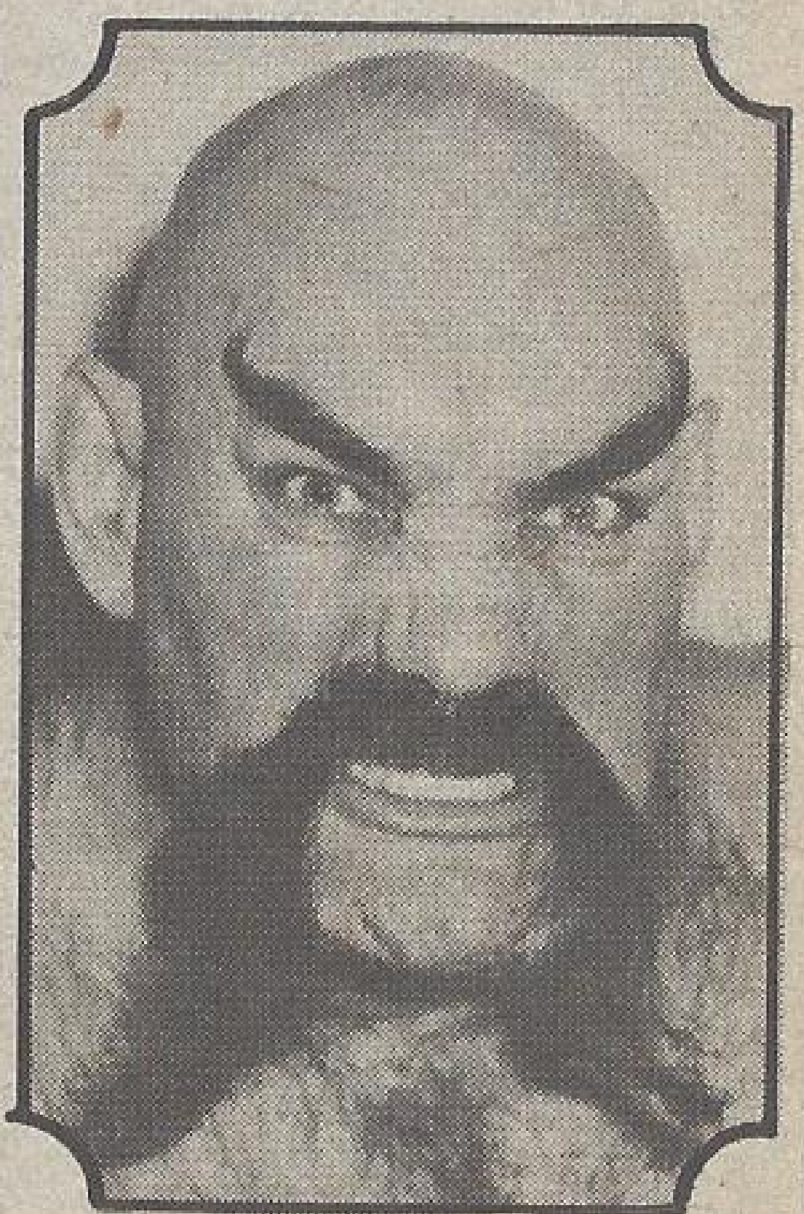
1—ANDRE THE GIANT

2—BRUNO SAMMARTINO

Tag Teams

1—THE ANDERSON BROTHERS

Most Hated Wrestlers



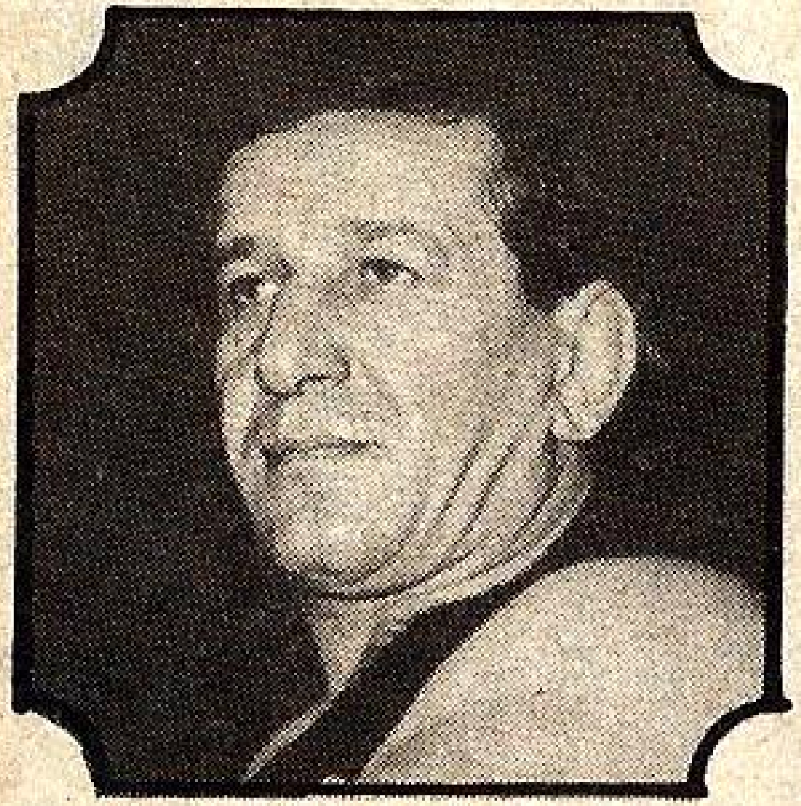
1—OX BAKER

2—THE SHEIK

SAMMARTINO

2—IVAN PUTSKI

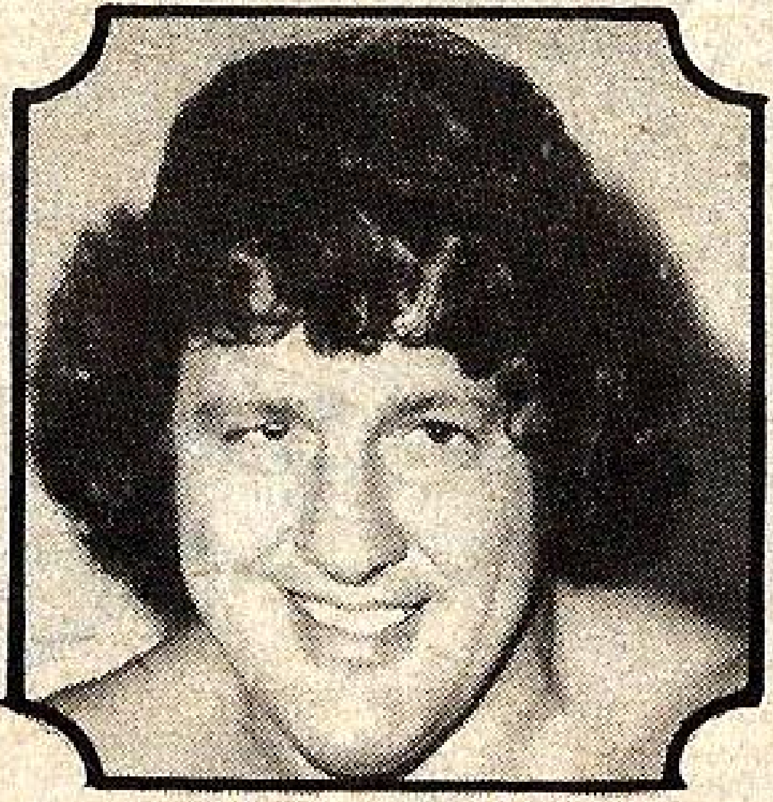
3—BOB BACKLUND


4—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW

5—PETER MAIVIA
6—KEN PATERA
7—BARON VON RASCHKE
8—TONY GAREA
9—GEORGE STEELE
10—LARRY ZBYSZKO

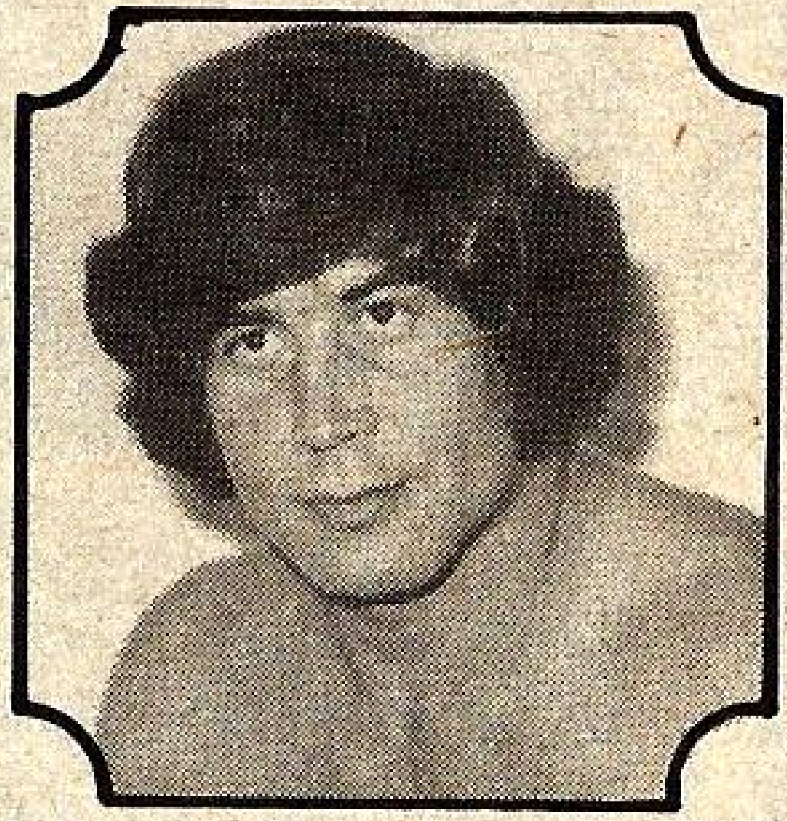
2—VERNE GAGNE

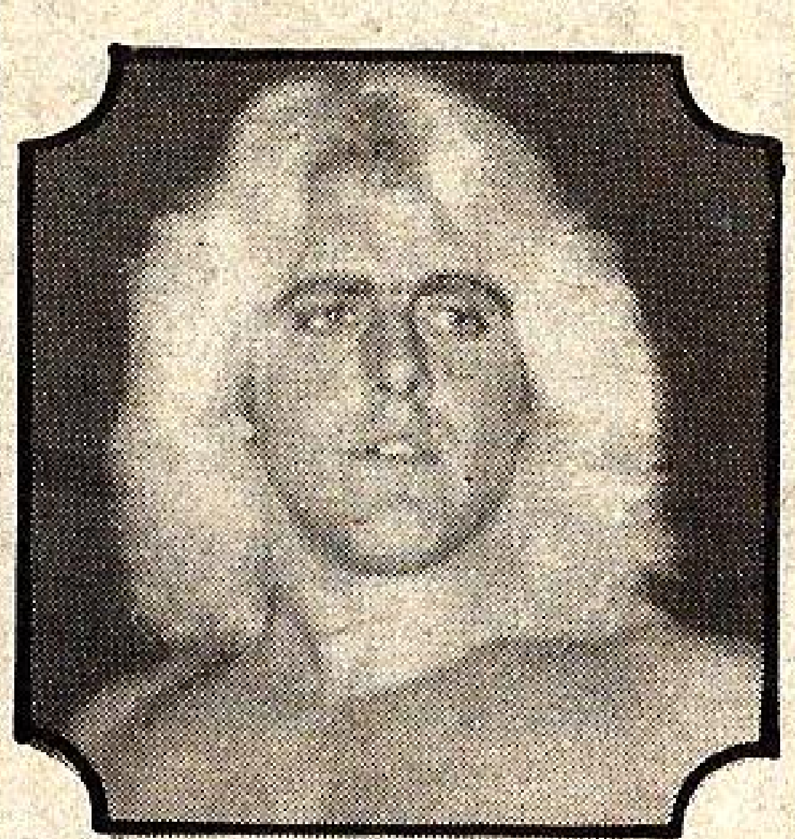
3—RAY STEVENS


4—BILLY ROBINSON

5—JIM BRUNZELL
6—PEDRO MORALES
7—SUPER DESTROYER
8—LORD AL HAYES
9—LARRY HENNIG
10—ANGELO MOSCA

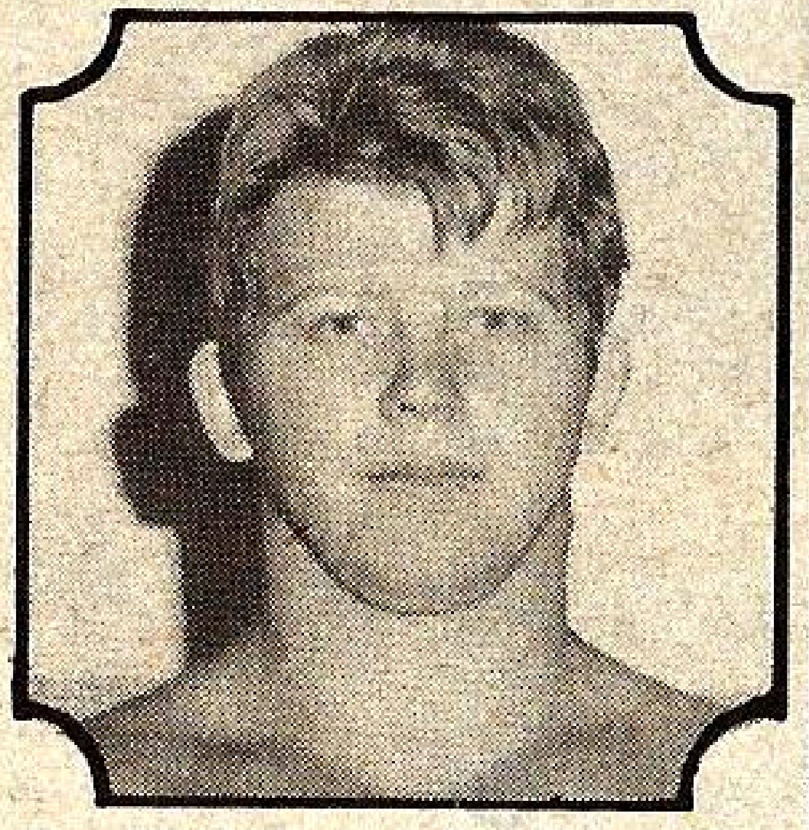
2—TERRY FUNK


3—JACK BRISCO


4—RIC FLAIR

5—PAUL JONES
6—DORY FUNK JR.
7—IVAN KOLOFF
8—BLACKJACK MULLIGAN
9—MIKE GRAHAM
10—STAN HANSEN

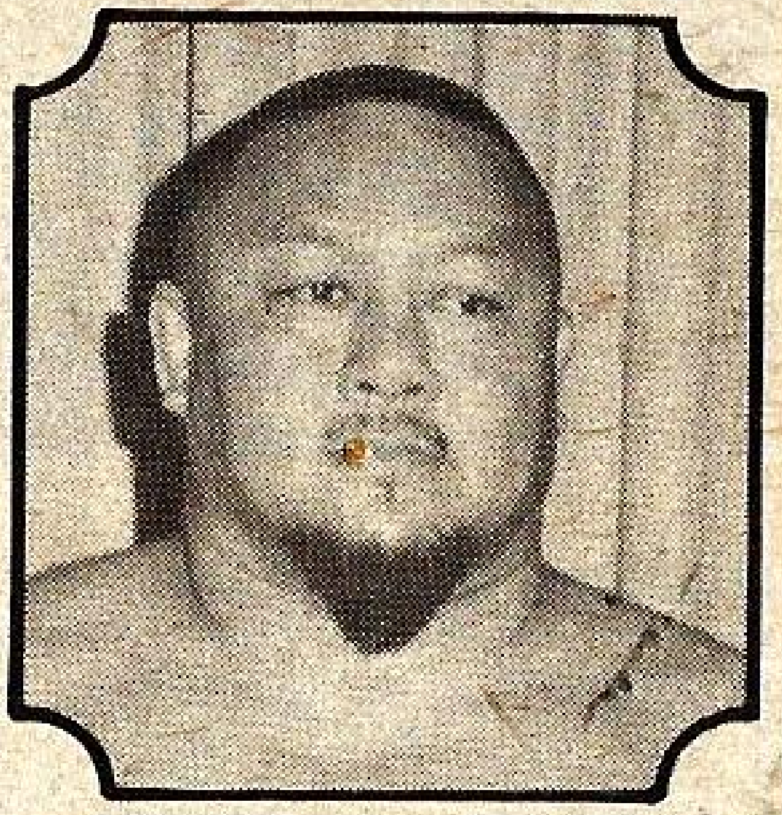
3—DUSTY RHODES


4—BOB BACKLUND

5—MIL MASCARAS

6—MR. WRESTLING II
7—IVAN PUTSKI
8—PAUL JONES
9—BILLY ROBINSON
10—MIGHTY IGOR

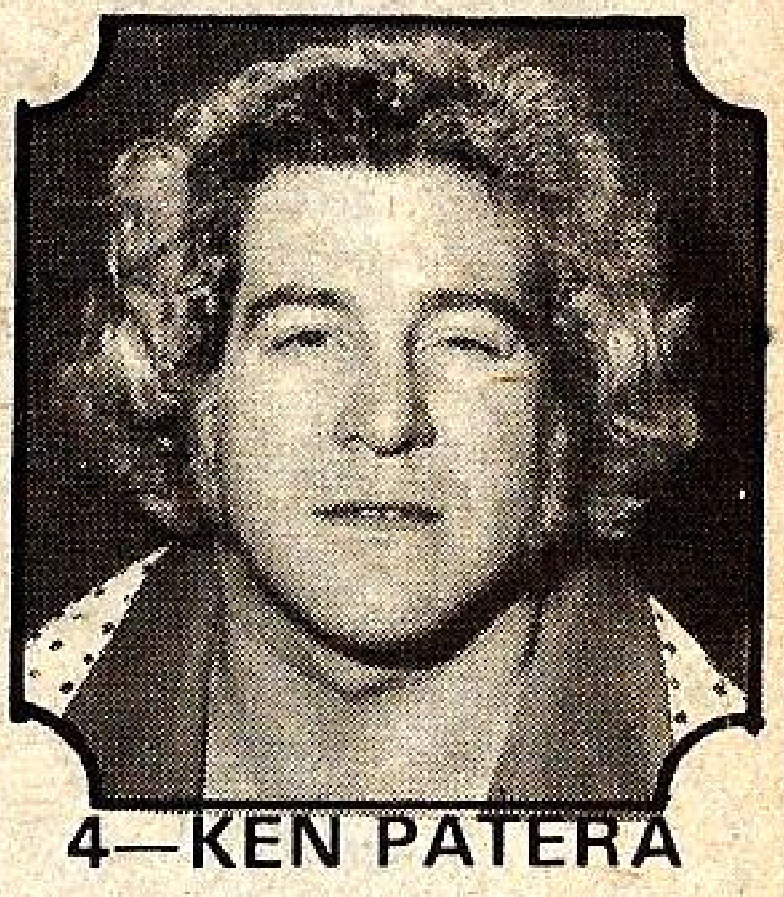
2—GREG GAGNE & JIM BRUNZELL

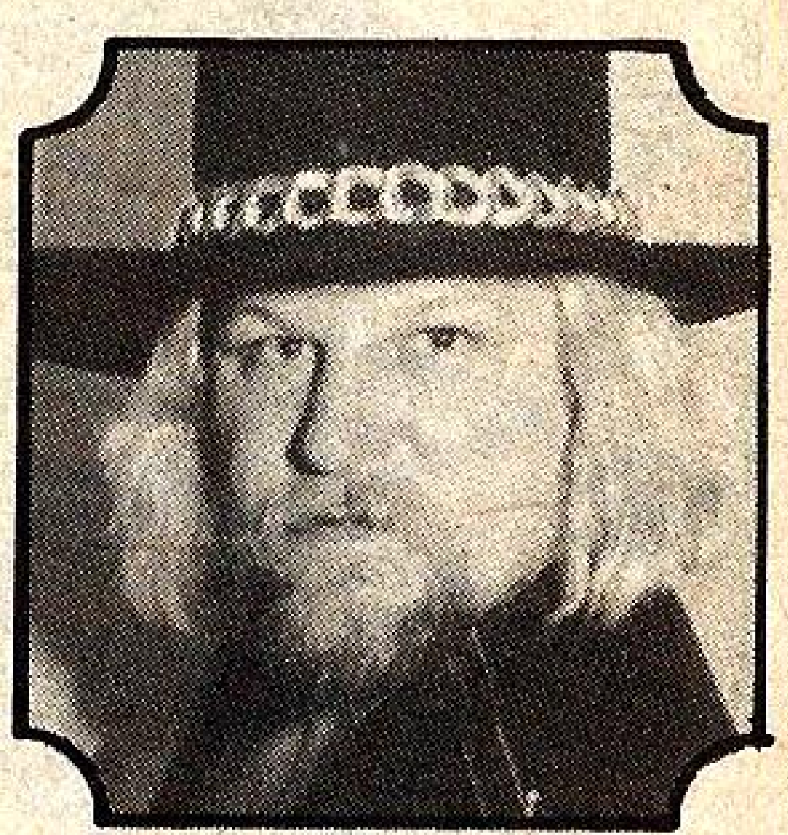


3—PROFESSOR TANAKA & MR. FUJI

4—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW & BILLY WHITE WOLF
5—RIC FLAIR & GREG VALENTINE
6—JACK & JERRY BRISCO
7—THE VALIANT BROTHERS
8—VERNE GAGNE & CRUSHER
9—GOLIATH & BLACK GORDMAN
10—BLACKJACK LANZA & BOBBY DUNCUM

3—ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER


4—KEN PATERA


5—STAN HANSEN

6—RIC FLAIR
7—BRUISER BRODIE
8—SUPERSTAR GRAHAM
9—NICK BOCKWINKLE
10—BLACKJACK MULLIGAN

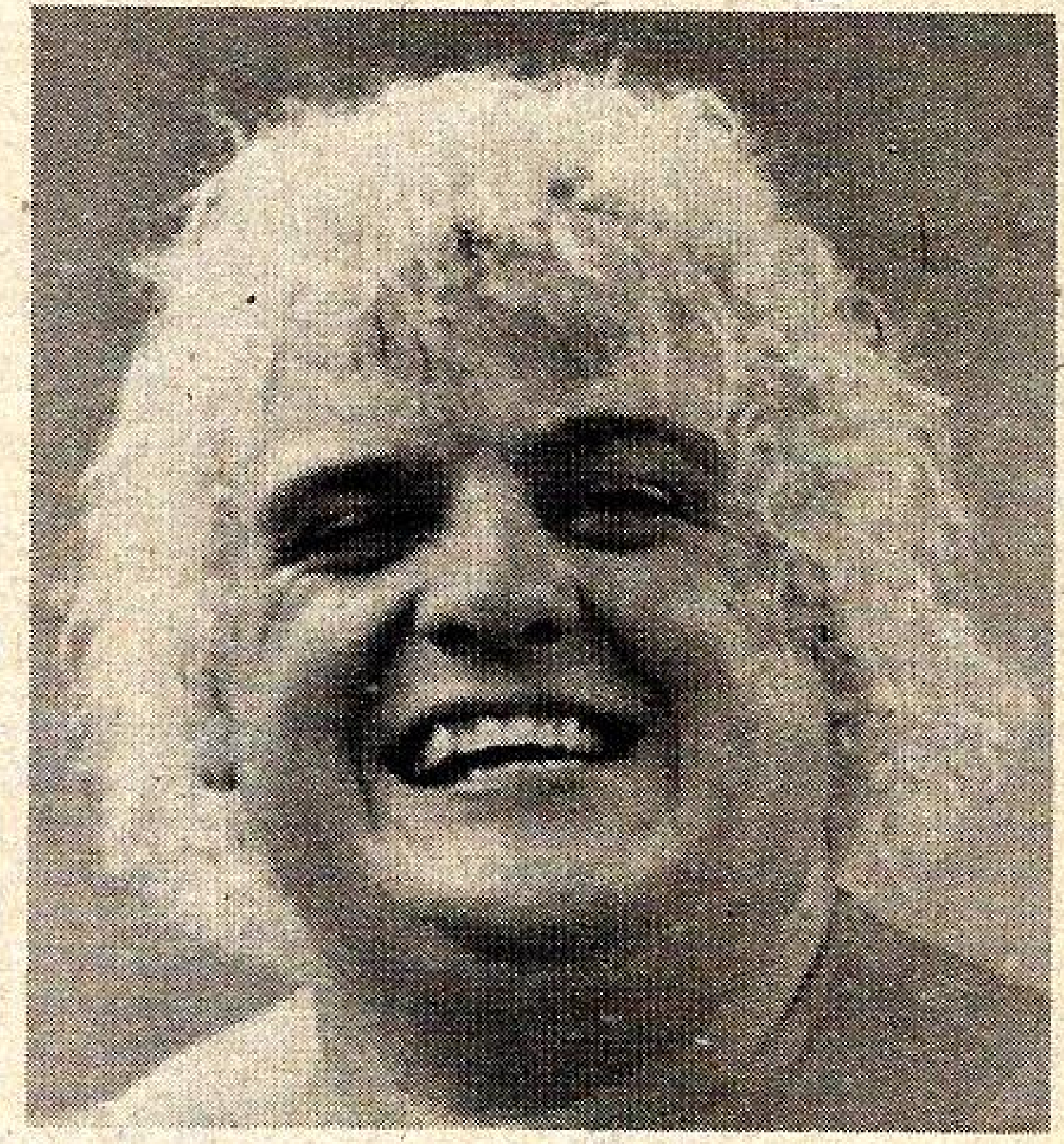
TOP WRESTLE
YOUR QUESTION

Do you have a question which concerns all of wrestling? Well, each month in INSIDE WRESTLING, the sport's greatest stars will answer a question sent in by a reader. If you wish to have your question answered by the stars, send it to: ASK THE STARS, INSIDE WRESTLING, Box 38, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

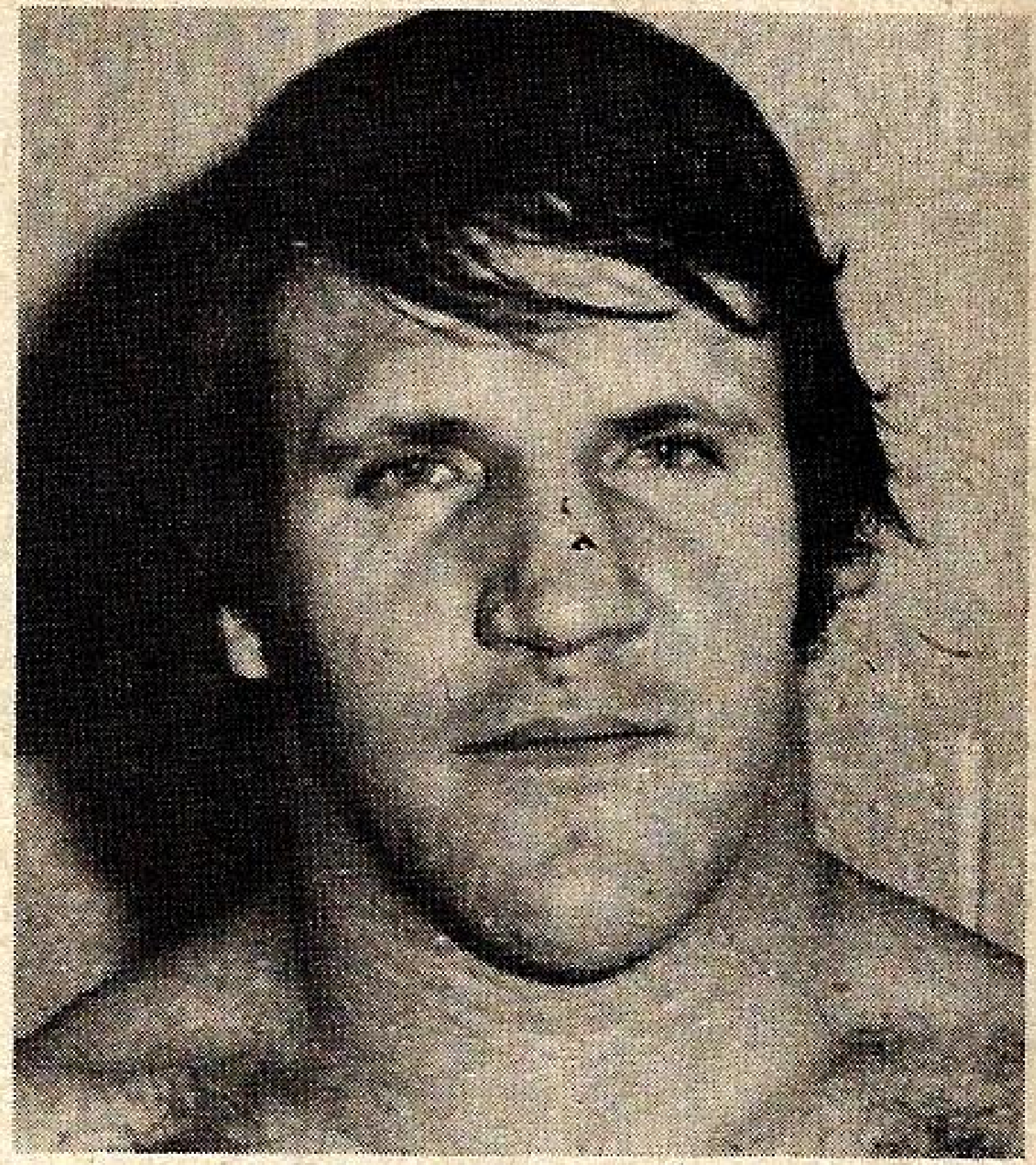
The "Question of the Month" is:

"If you had the opportunity to change anything in the sport, what would you change?"

Submitted by: Michelle Beren; Commerce City, Colorado

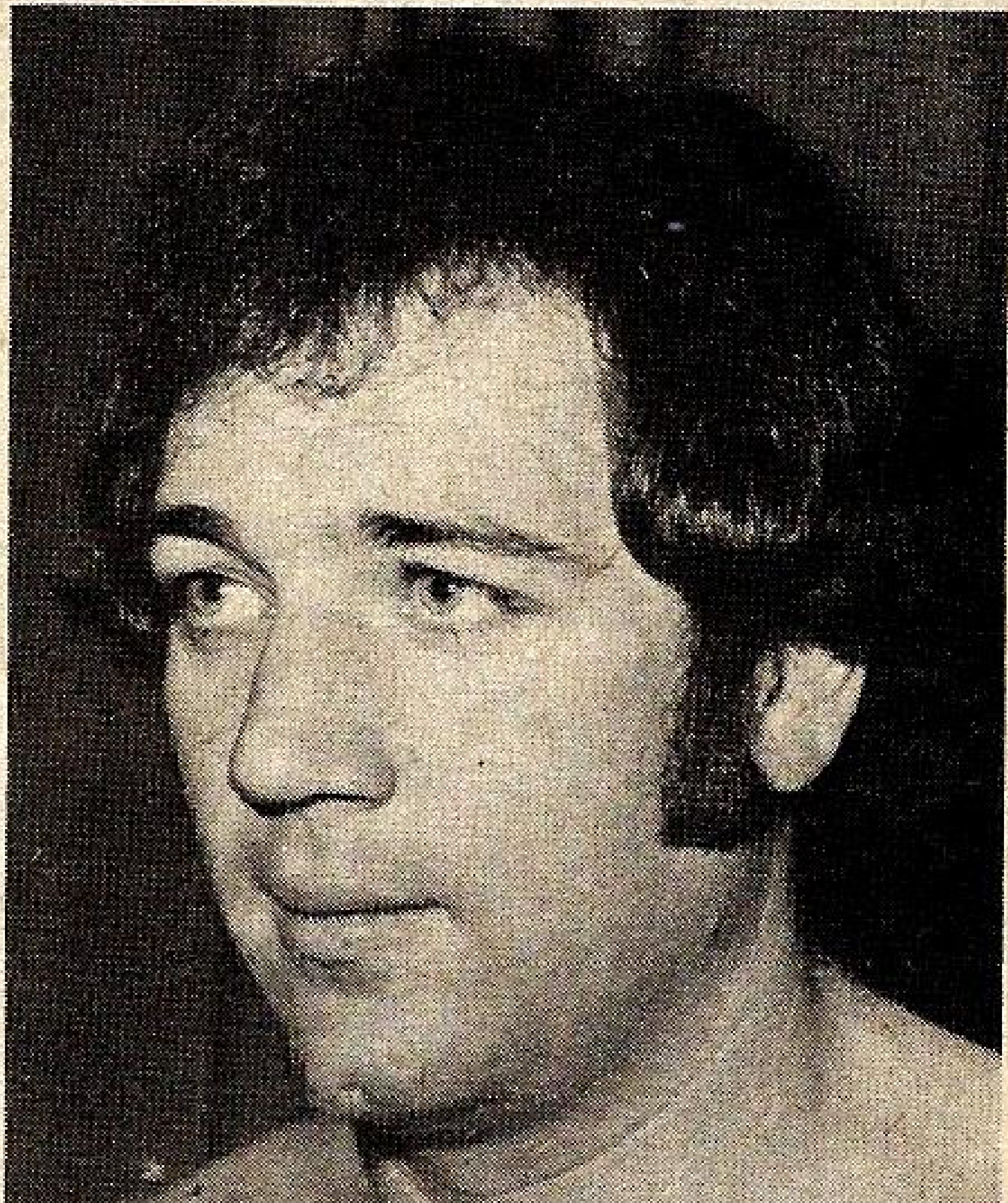


DUSTY RHODES
"If there was one thing I could change, it would be the rule that says championships can't change hands on a disqualification. I have come so close to winning the belt so many times, but I haven't won it because of this."



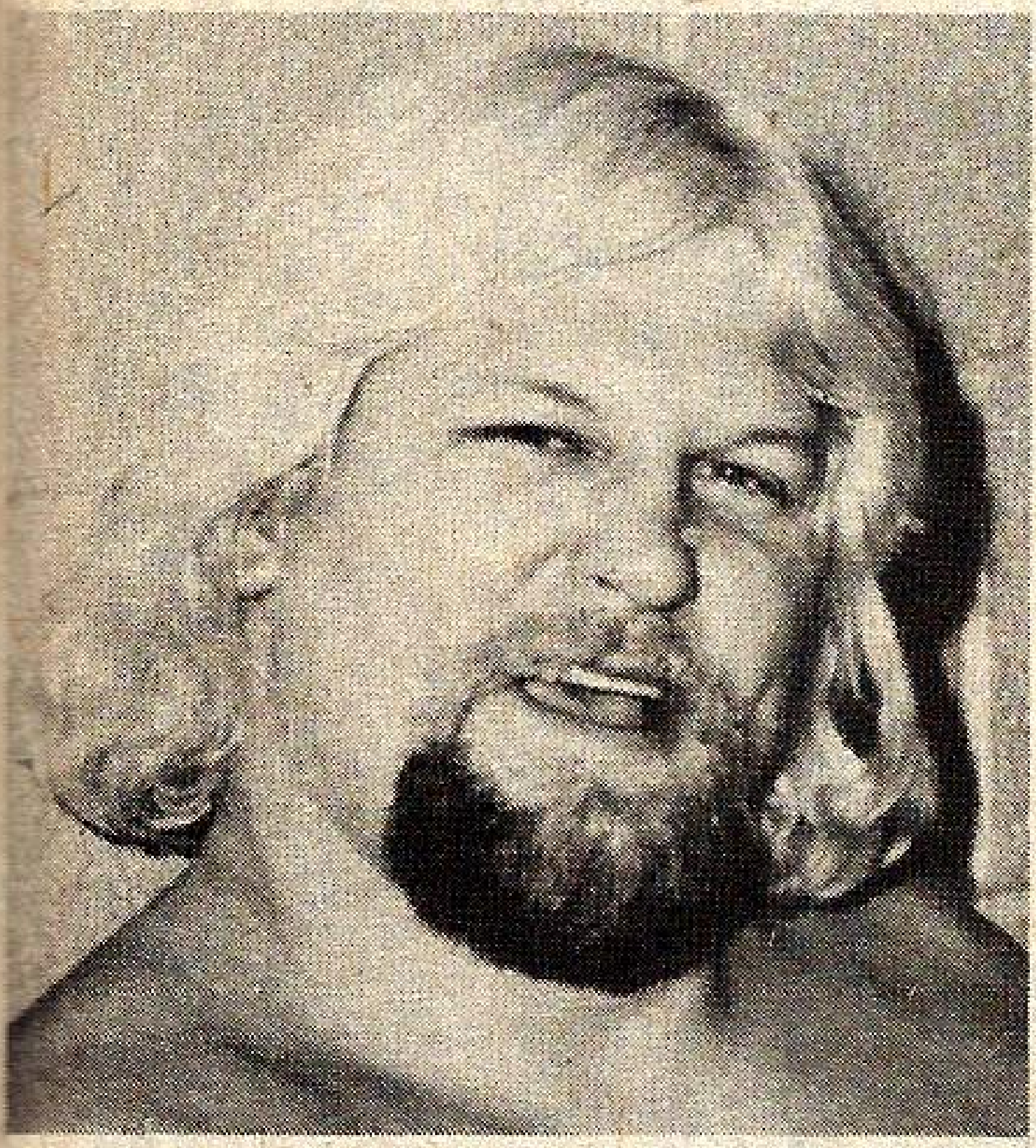
BRUNO SAMMARTINO
"I would like to see the elimination of gimmick matches, like chain matches, coal miner's glove matches, cage matches, stretcher matches, etc. I think these hurt the sport more than help it."

ERNIE LADD
"To me, wrestling is now the best it has ever been. I like things as they are, and I wouldn't want to change a thing. In many ways, wrestling is the most beautiful and flexible of all athletic competition."

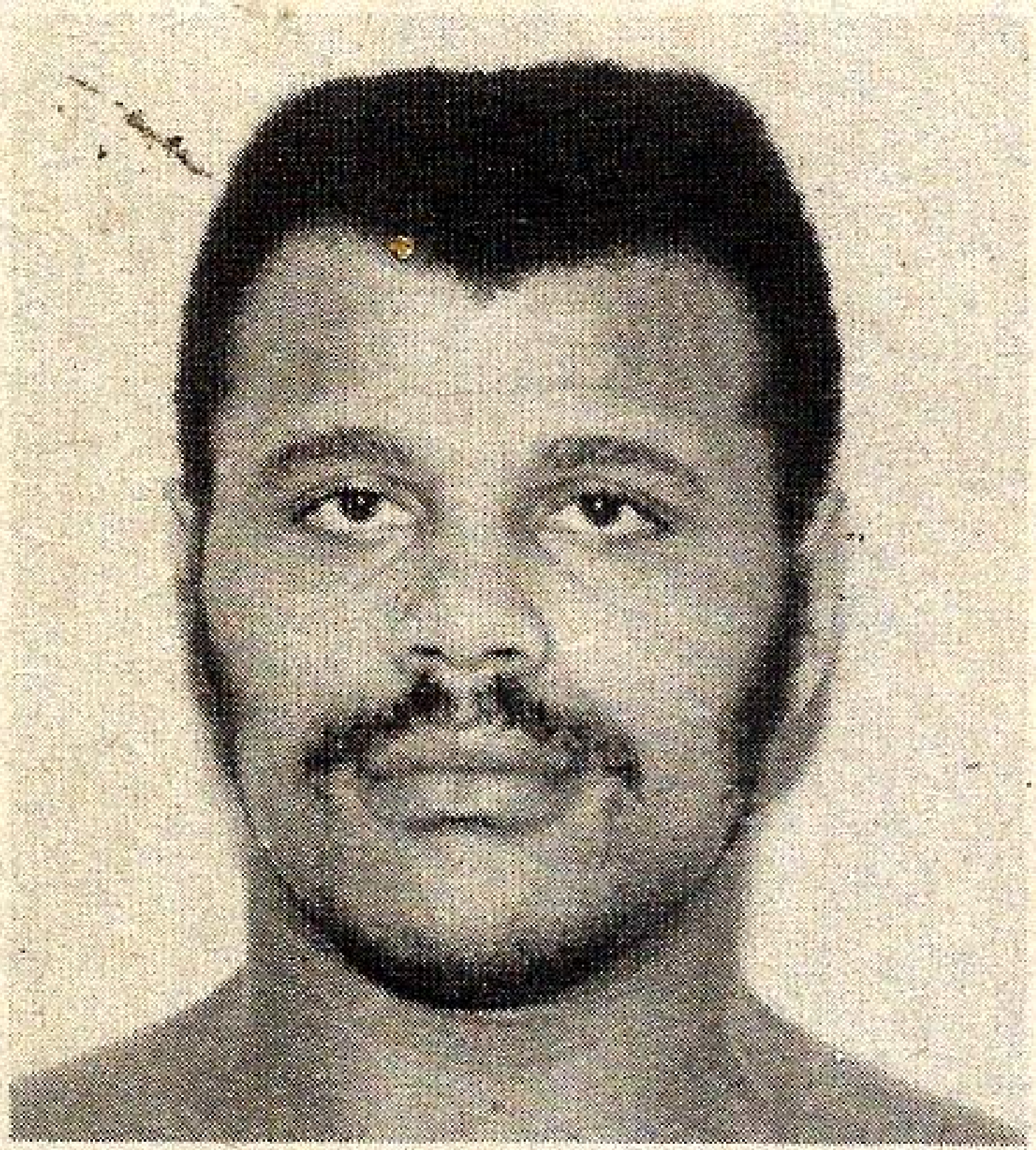


GREG GAGNE
"I long for the day when all wrestlers are brilliant tacticians. My partner, Jim Brunzell, and myself have been working on innovative procedures to help this idea along. If everyone was a scientific wrestler, it would be great."

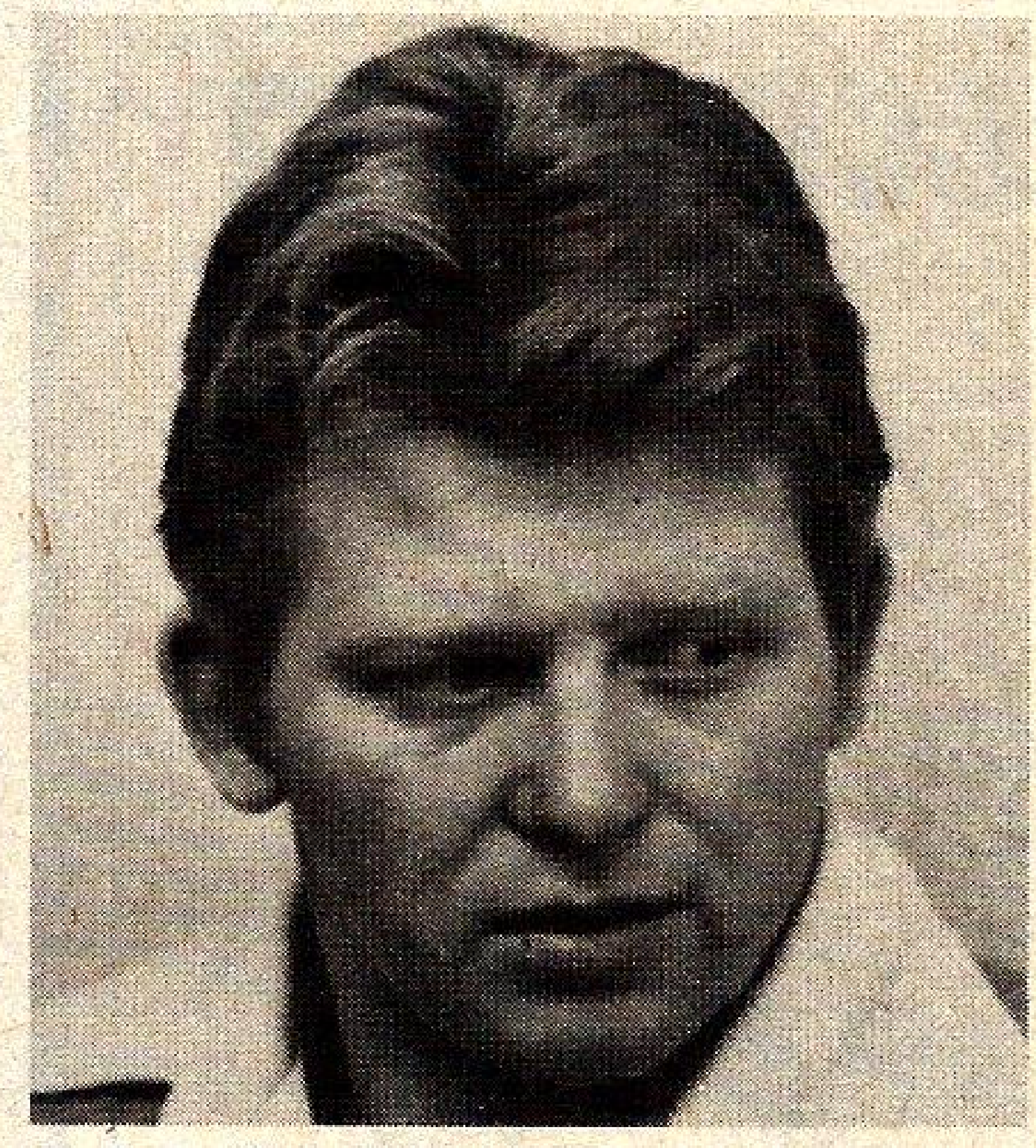
ERS ANSWER
OF THE MONTH



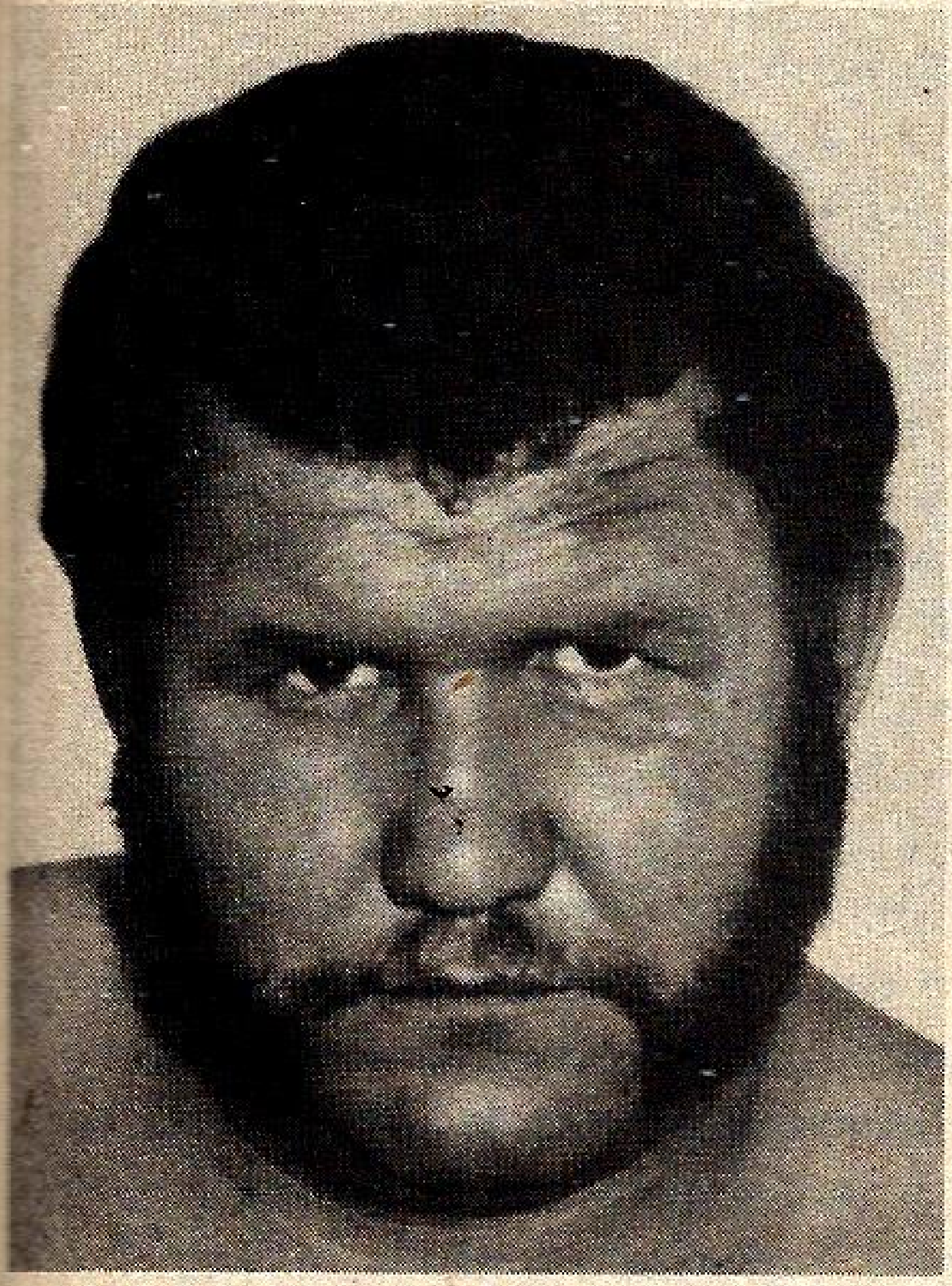
STAN HANSEN
"One change I would like to see is the elimination of fools in wrestling. Men like Dick Murdoch, Dusty Rhodes, and Bruno Sammartino should never have been allowed into the sport in the first place."



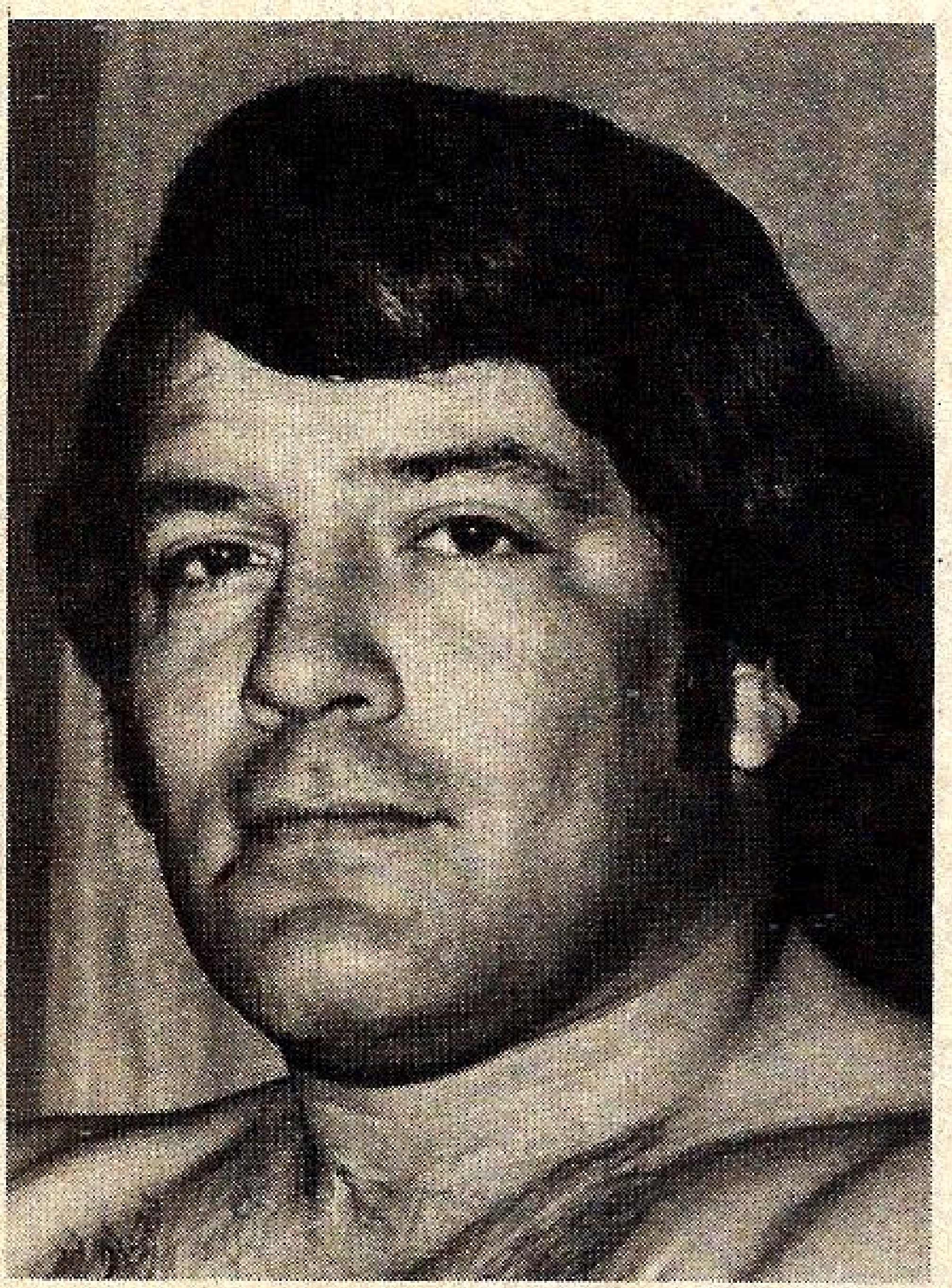
ROCKY JOHNSON
"I would like to see men like Sheik or Abdullah the Butcher not allowed to compete. I don't consider them athletes. They are just men who like to promote unnecessary violence and injury. Who needs that?"



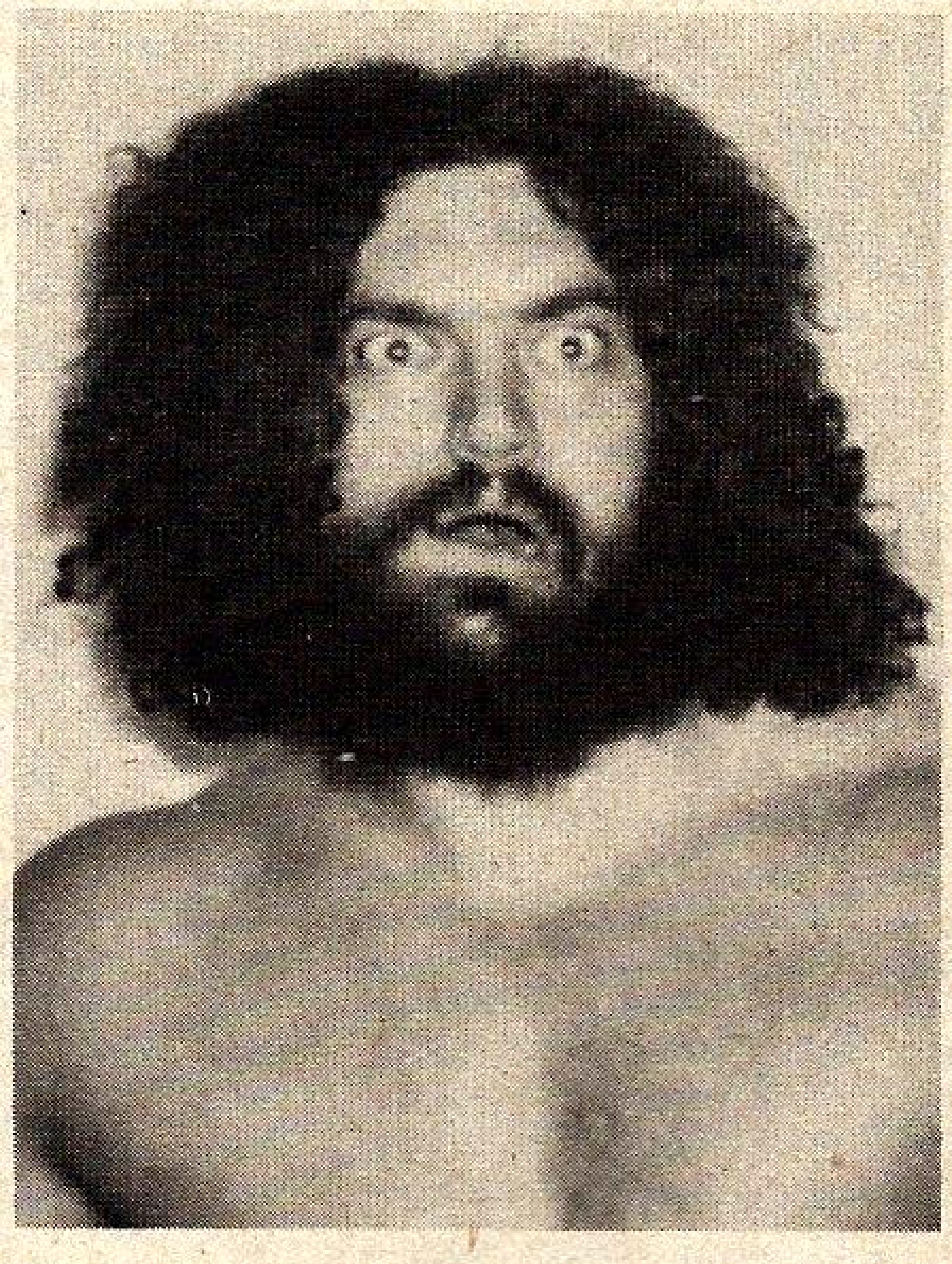
BOB BACKLUND
"Though I have only been a professional wrestler a short time, I remember my amateur days fondly. In the amateurs, we relied more on complex maneuvers than on brute strength. I would like to see more of that."



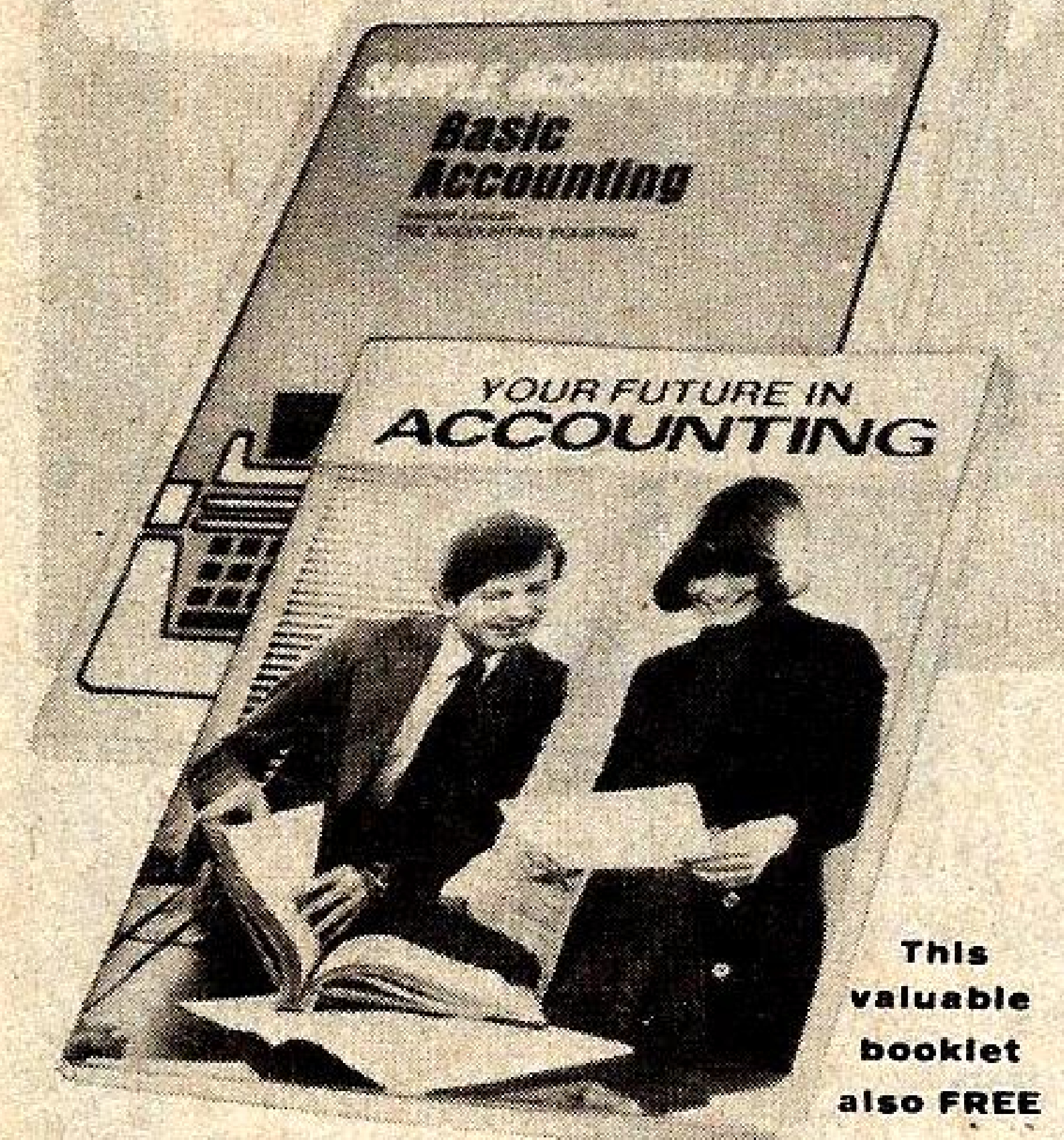
HARLEY RACE
"There is only one change I would like to see—better competition. The idiots who are allowed to wrestle now are the lowest. Is it any wonder I am going to be able to keep my title for a long, long time?"



PAUL JONES
"I would like to see a stricter enforcement of the rules. Too many men are allowed to get away with extremely vicious tactics. This might mean that there should be a second referee in the ring."



BRUISER BRODIE
"I think it is about time we upgrade the quality of the fans. They really must be dense. They do not appreciate the talents of men like myself, which shows they really don't know much about anything." □



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BODYSLAMS & PINFALLS

(Continued from Page 10)

Happier times for Bobby Heenan. He is shown above with his stable of wrestlers, many of them champions or former champions. Now all this is gone for Heenan. He is indefinitely suspended from managing his wrestlers, many of whom would have been nowhere without Bobby's help.

and show their anger. Until Heenan is reinstated with a *full public apology from Blackburn,* all smart wrestling fans should go to the arenas wearing black armbands. When someone asks who died, reply, "Integrity in wrestling."

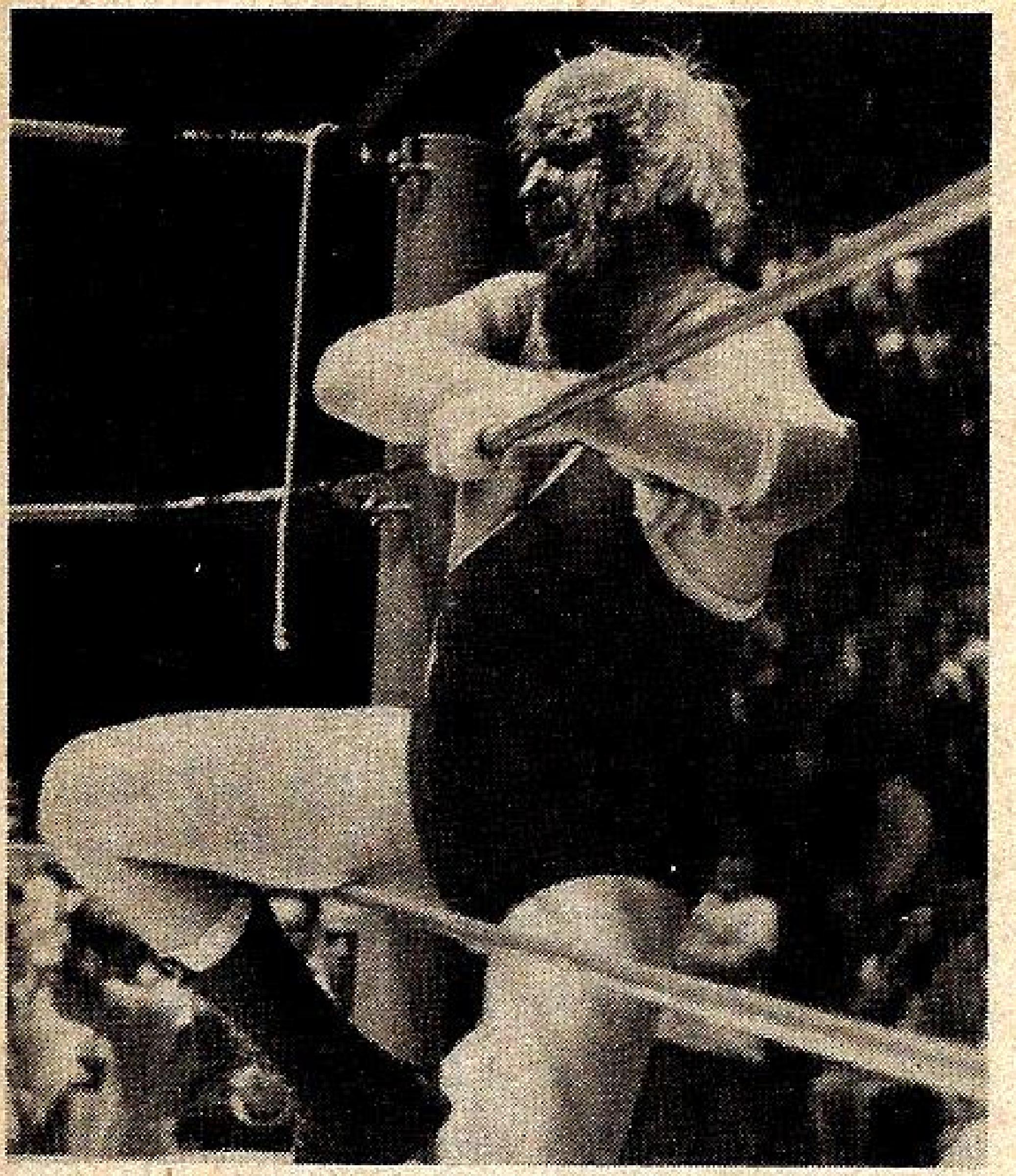
Black armbands will also show strangers they have something in common. Intelligent wrestling fans in the minority, will easily spot their colleagues. In any wrestling arena throughout the land, friends will be visible, lonely no longer!

The fans can make wrestling safe for the sport's real superstars. No longer will commissions be controlled by bribes from "scientific" wrestlers. When they see the corps of black armbands, united to preserve wrestling, all the money in the world won't be enough to overcome their fear. We have something all the money in the world can't buy—the knowledge that we're right!

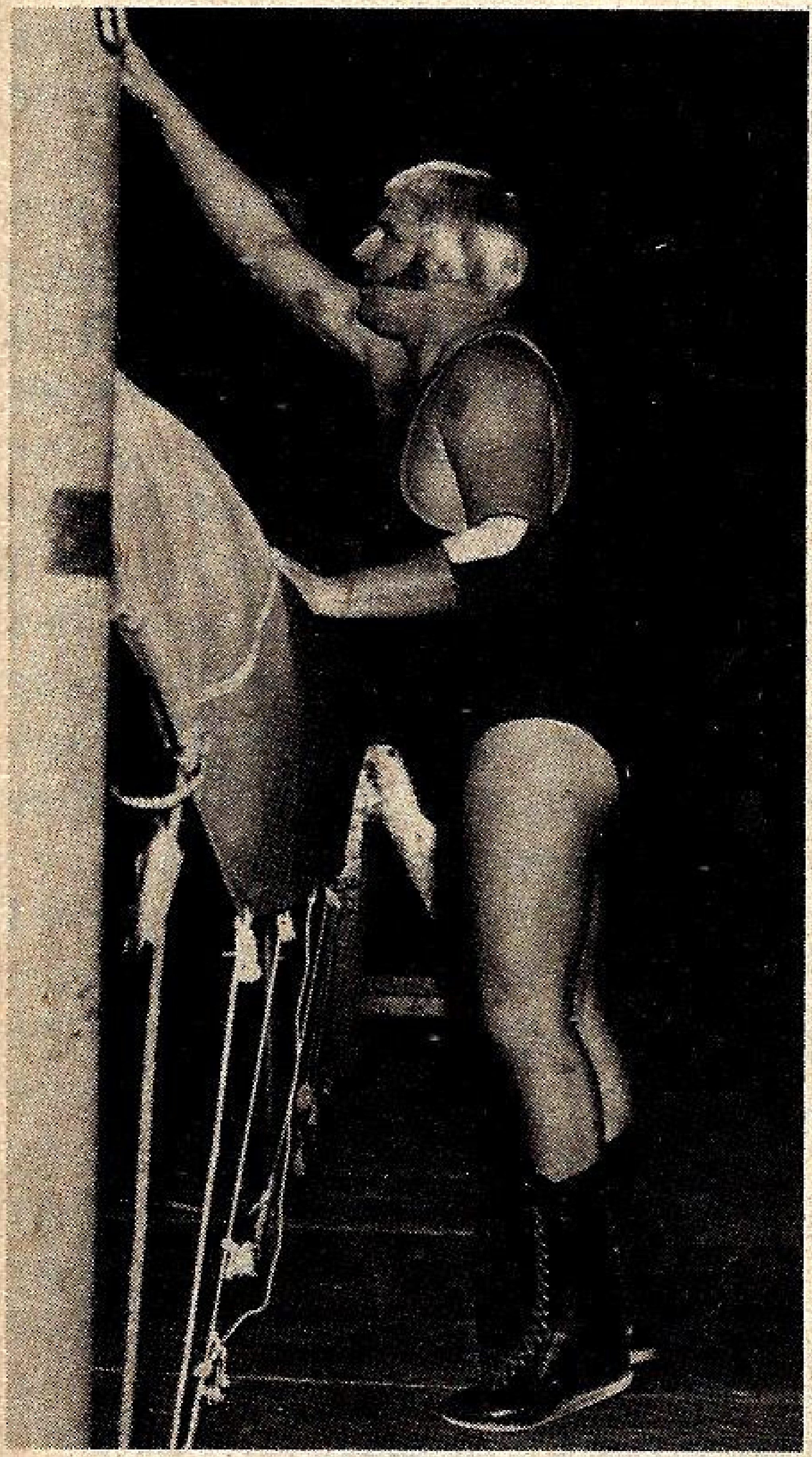
Still, all the movements in the world can't erase the disgrace Heenan has suffered. Friends have visited the man often during his suspension, trying to cheer him up. But Heenan outside a wrestling arena is like a dreamer without a vision. The only thing that can make the man happy is wrestling combat. Only that can steal the sorrow from his eyes.

"If I had done something," Bobby moans piteously, "then I could see them being angry. But I was just sitting at ringside, studying the match, when Greg Gagne leapt from the ring and started attacking me. Well, everyone knows the poor guy is mentally unstable, so I can't say I was surprised. To defend myself, I grabbed a chair, trying to keep him back, much like a lion tamer keeping off a beast. You can imagine my shock when Gagne ran into the chair and knocked himself out. I was horrified the poor lad might be injured!

"But when I found out I was suspended, that was a shock! Did Gagne even get a reprimand? Of course, since he's crazy, it wouldn't

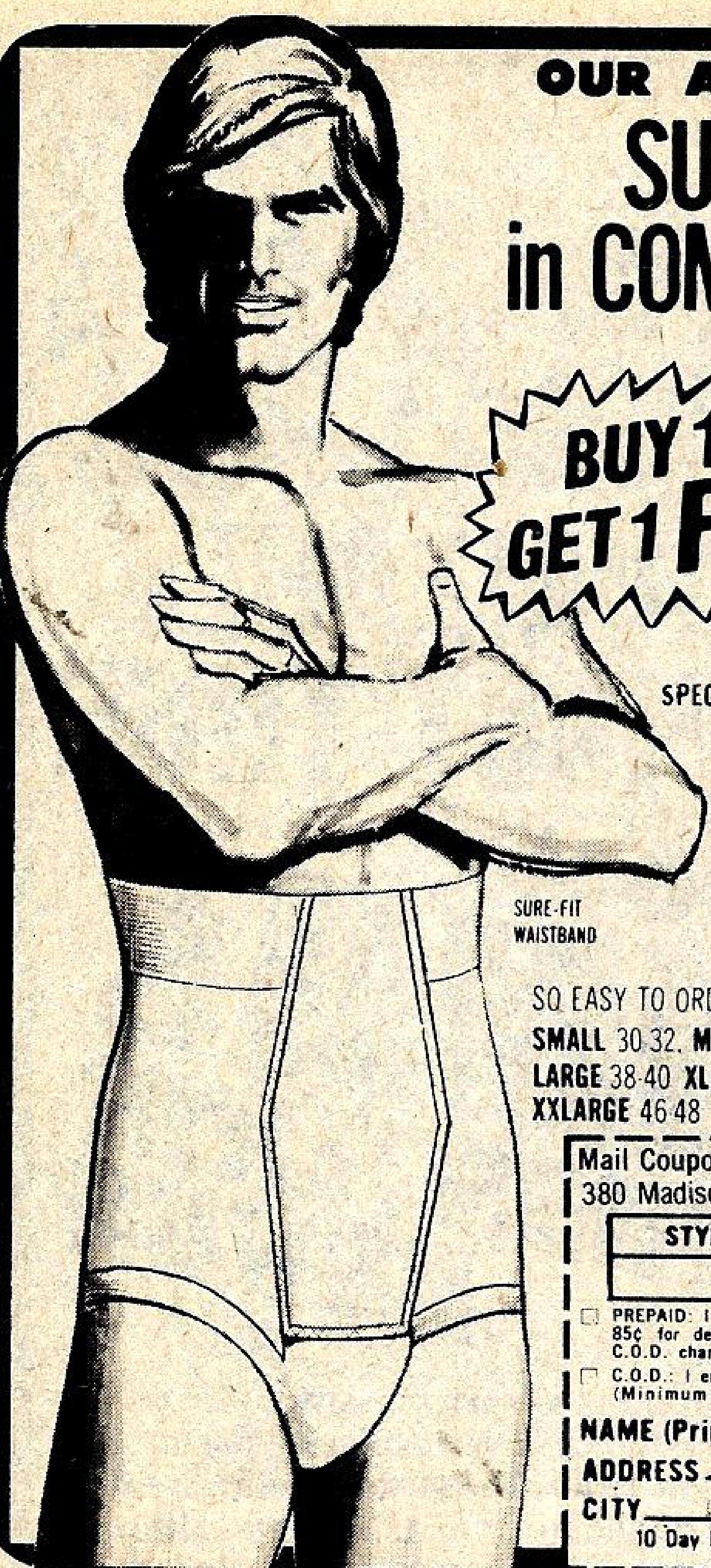


Bobby has also been involved in the battles as a wrestler. Sometimes he has done well (below), and sometimes he has been battered badly (above).



have accomplished anything. But still, why did they suspend me for defending myself? Is that fair or just?''

Of course it isn't. But there is no justice in sport, although there ought to be in the commissions. Bobby Heenan is a martyr to all wrestlers who believe winning is the most important thing on earth. It remains to be seen whether or not his martyrdom will be in vain. The answer is in our hands. We will be the ones to praise or blame. ☐



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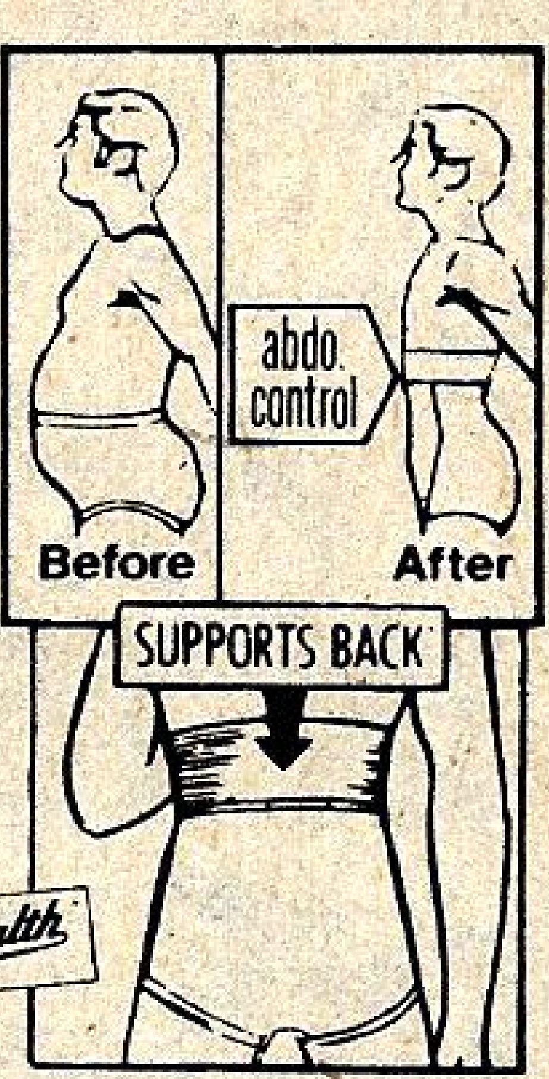

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ON THE ROAD

(Continued from Page 12)

quickly became an unwanted fracas.

Before I realized what was happening, Ken Patera and Tony Garea were at each other's throats. Larry Zbyszko and Stan Stasiak were also battling ferociously. If I didn't know better, I would have to say it looked like a battle royal! This was not what I had in mind for a quiet summer party.

It took very little time for everyone to become involved in the chaos. I tried as hard as I could to stay out of the action, except when I was trying to save a few precious items in the house from being destroyed by the battlers.

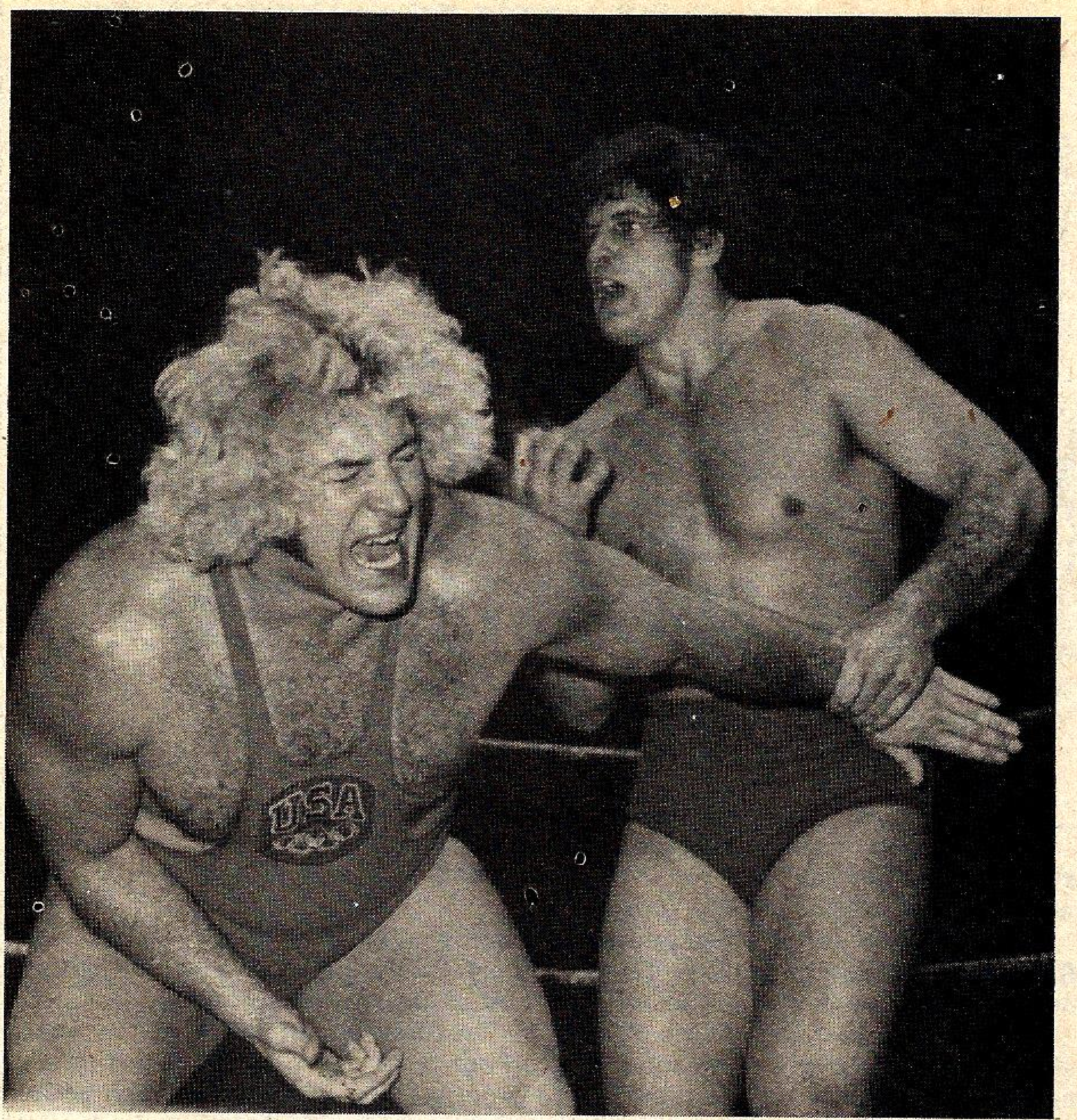
You must understand the position I was in: Here were some of my best friends trying to kill each other! It just didn't make sense. A summer home in the Hamptons is not the proper place for this kind of activity. Especially when it is my house! It was impossible for me to take sides in this mess; I did not know who was right and who was wrong. If it were up to me, I would have said that they were *all* wrong.

I learned a lot about the people I invited to this party. They can never forget past wrongs. I think that is the reason so many of them were battling so fiercely. That is why Larry Zbyszko and Stan Stasiak were fighting so intensely. They both told me that later on. Tony Garea and Ken Patera told me the same thing.

After nearly an hour—when my entire house was in a shambles—the chaos finally died down. I think everyone was very weary and tired. This unwanted and unscheduled battle royal had been exhausting. And I had a lot to clean up. I also had to do a little thinking.

It is my philosophy not to be concerned with a wrestler's tactics. When I interview a man, it is not important whether or not he follows the rules letter-perfect or not. Why should I care? It is not my area of concern. Nor do I care much for office

Ken Patera and Tony Garea should not be allowed to be together outside of an arena. The two men are determined to destroy each other, and they don't care where they do it!



politics. The dispute between Randy Gordon and Dan Shocket bores me. That is why I spend so much time on the road.

But this party sorely tested my philosophy. I was furious at all concerned for ruining the celebration. And I know I cannot blame anyone for what happened. Rulebreakers and scientific wrestlers are equally at fault. However, it will be a long time before I invite any of these people to my summer home again.

For the most part, wrestlers are gentlemen. An occurrence like the one which happened here is rare. But I find it difficult to justify anyone's actions in this case. From now on, I think I'll stick to life on the road. It would be better for all concerned. ☐

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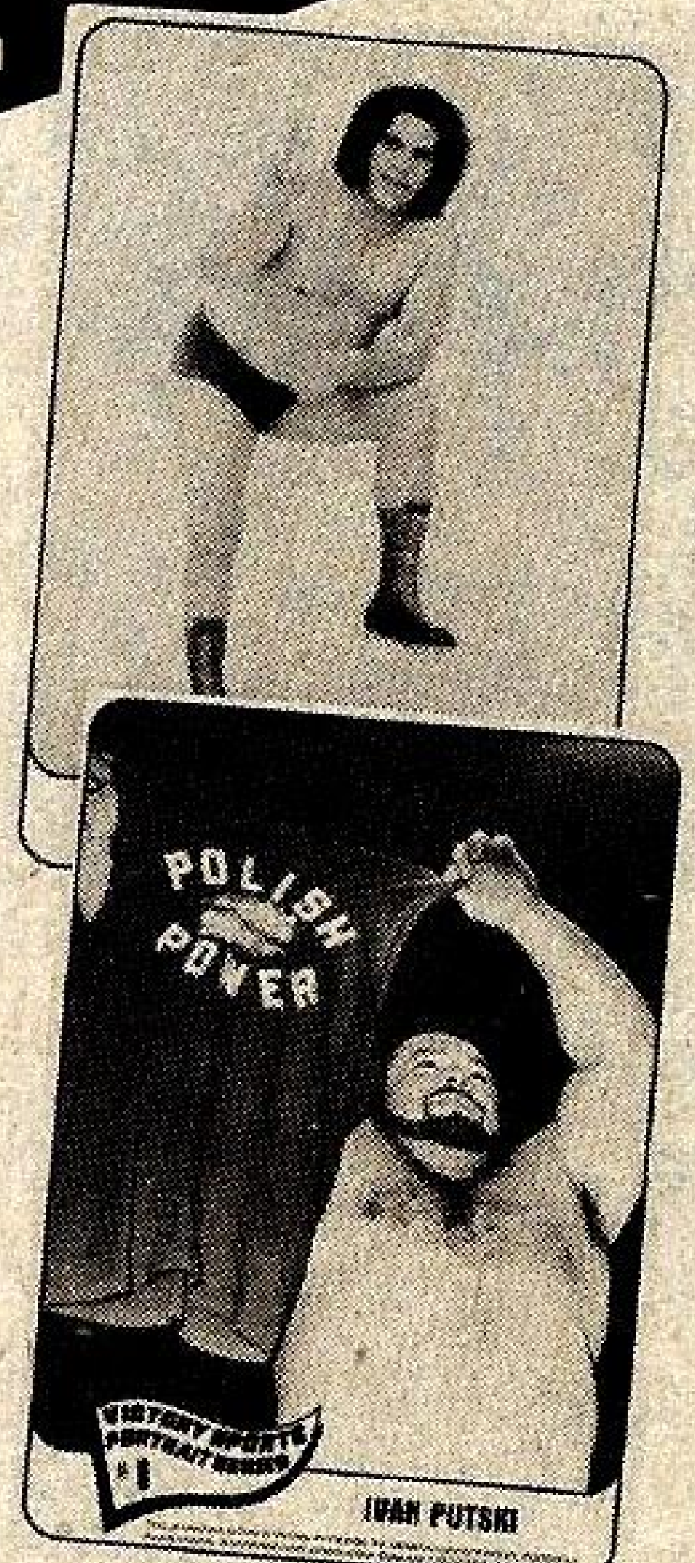

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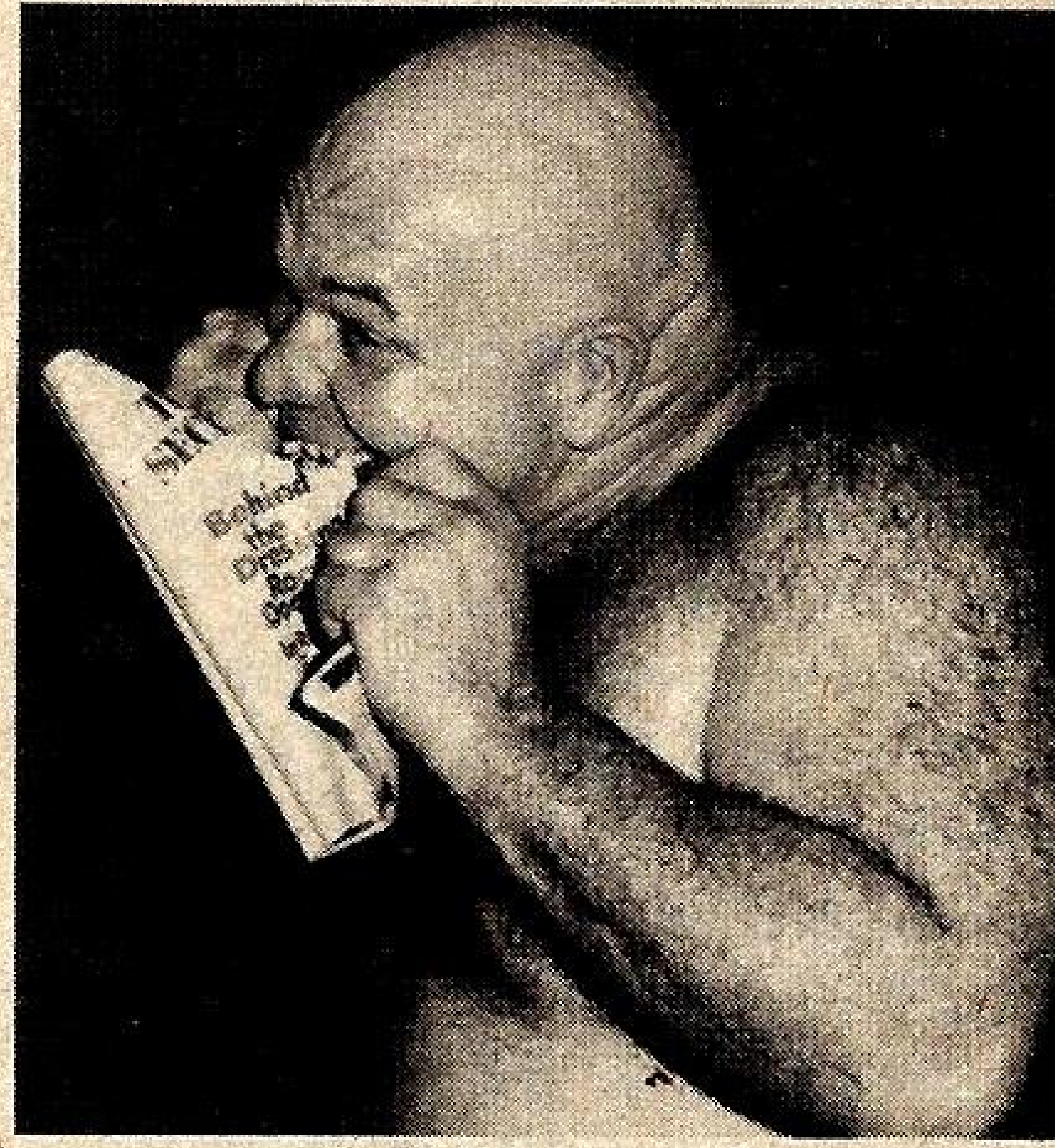
BEHIND THE DOOR

(Continued from Page 8)



George "The Animal" Steele is eating my column! He didn't stop chewing until he ate the entire page!

hide it from me. And if they can't hide it from me, they can't hide it from you, the fans. Because everything I know, I tell you.

Albano jumped up and accused Patera of loading his cigars, and the two got into a shouting match. Guess what? Patera got so upset, he put on his street clothes and left the arena. He didn't wrestle that night. Wait until Patera and Albano read that it was me who loaded the cigar. But meanwhile, they've been feuding more and more, and it's starting to come out into the open. Ah, I'm sitting on cloud nine!

Dino Bravo has had a series of lifesize posters made of "Superbum" Billy Graham, Ox Baker, Harley Race, Abdullah the Butcher and a few other notorious rulebreakers. What does he do with them? Before every match, Bravo takes one of the posters into his dressing room and unwinds by throwing darts at the poster. Abdullah looks great with a dart stuck in his nose!

Editor-in-Chief Peter King and veteran reporter Bill Apter recently visited crazy man George "The Animal" Steele. They gave him a copy of "INSIDE WRESTLING," which he seemed to enjoy—until he came to my column. When he saw it, he took a bite out of it. He didn't stop eating until he had finished my entire column. He didn't even use salt!

My colleague, Michael B. Kape, recently threw a big party, at which my rulebreaking colleague Dan Shocket and I got into a blazing fistfight. Check out Mike's "On the Road." He tells it like it is.

What's the fastest growing club in professional wrestling? It's "Randy's Raiders," a group exclusively for fans of scientific wrestlers—and against rulebreakers—started by Connecticut restaurant owner Ching Yeh.

I receive dozens of letters per day requesting membership in the club. I personally read all the letters, then pass them along to Ching. He is presently having "Randy's Raiders" membership cards printed, and as soon as they're ready, Ching will be mailing them out.

All I ask from club members are two things: 1) Uphold the tradition of scientific wrestling and 2) Keep me informed as to what is going on in your area, especially with the rulebreakers.

I want to ruin them before they ruin wrestling.

And by the way, your letters are working. Dan Shocket is on the run. He's pleading for his life as hundreds of letters from fans are pouring in every week to "BAN DAN." I ask you not to stop. Even if you've written to "BAN DAN," write again. Shocket, Albano, Patera, and all the other crumbs like them are out to cripple people and take over wrestling. Dan uses this magazine for his own evil intentions. He must be stopped at all costs. Write to:

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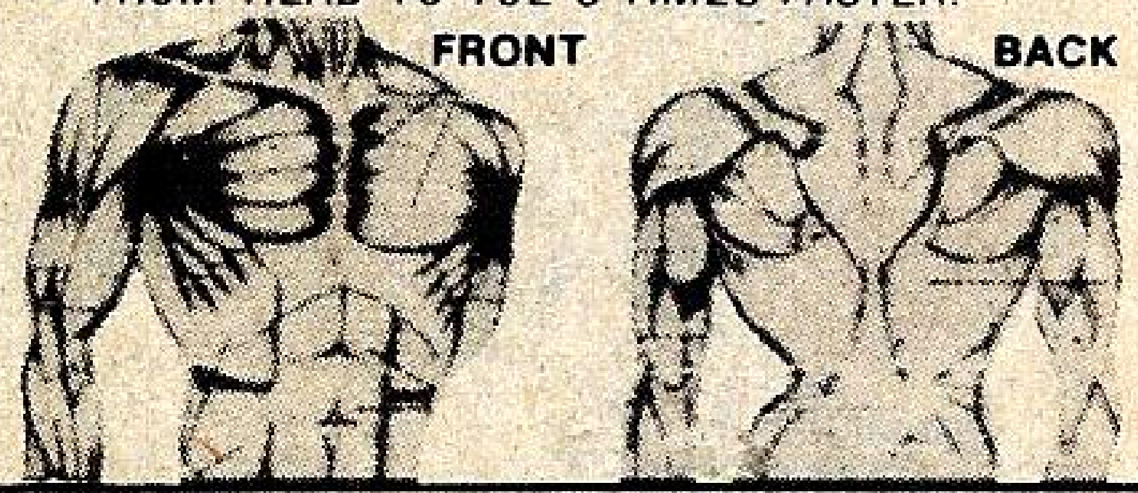

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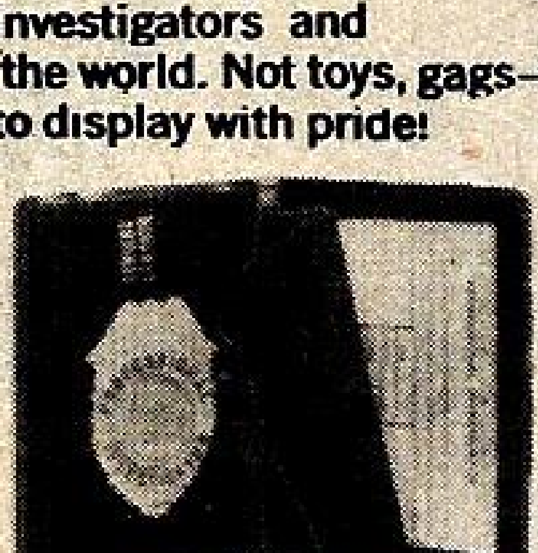
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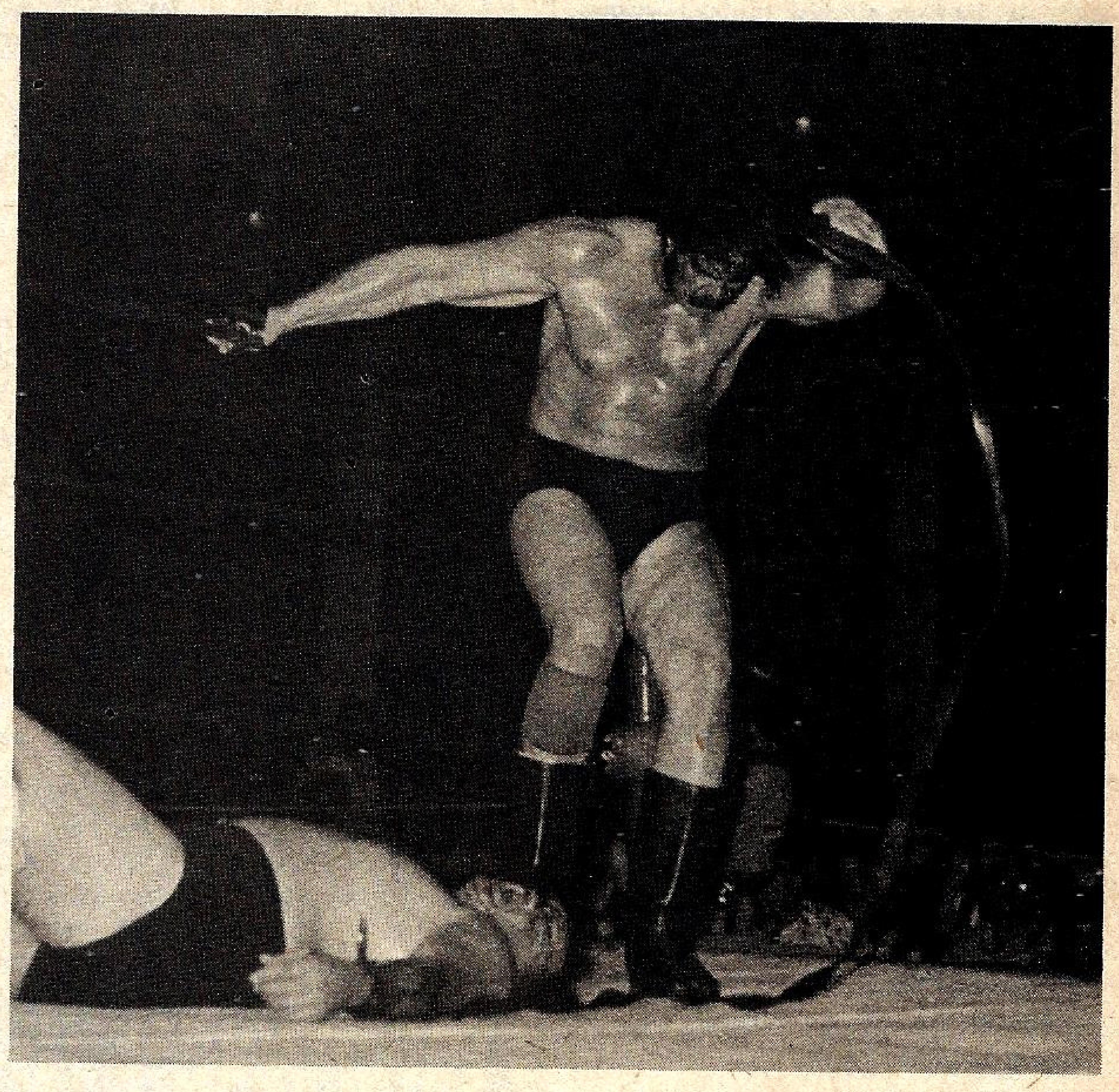
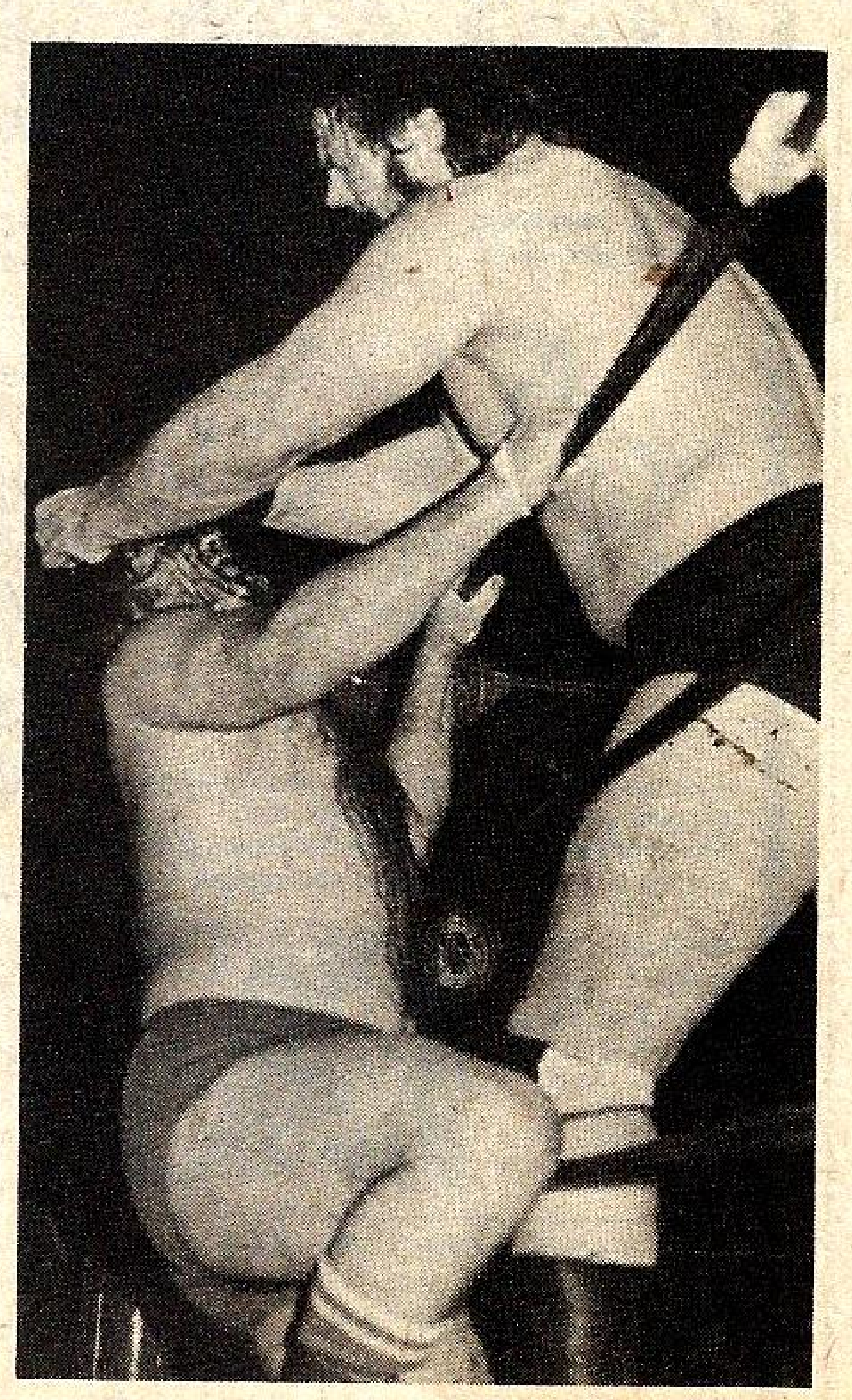
SHOULD WE APOLOGIZE TO BLACKJACK MULLIGAN?

(Continued from Page 25)



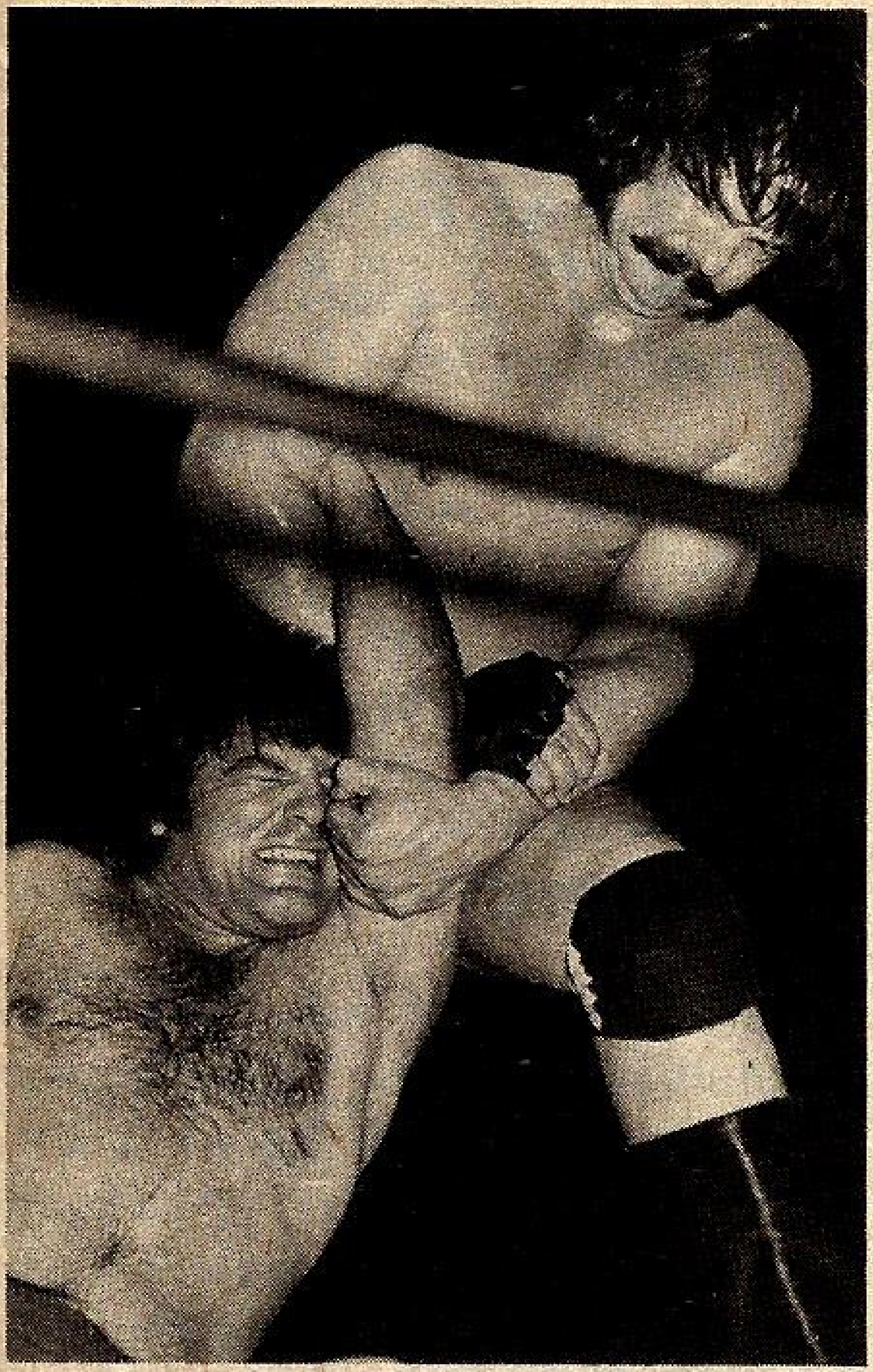
Several men have tried valiantly to take the title from Mulligan, including Wahoo McDaniel (above) and Paul Jones (below). Blackjack Mulligan has shown he can be a vicious champion.



had against Race. The most devastating victories count heaviest. Men who can claim only disqualification victories over Harley must be put further down the list. Mulligan can only boast of a disqualification victory against Race. That means other men deserve to have a title shot ahead of him.

Not everyone agrees with that theory of rating wrestlers. Some say the most currently successful men should be first in line for title shots. But how far in the past do you look to determine who is the most successful? A week, a month, a year? And successful against whom? All these questions must arise when rating wrestlers by their "current" accomplishments.

These are not insurmountable questions and they could be resolved. But with Harley Race, we feel the best way to rate the contender is by their past victories over Harley Race. This works in most cases. But Mulligan is a champion in his own right.



Paul Jones is in terrible agony while Mulligan works on his arms. It seems Blackjack Mulligan rather enjoys being cruel to his opponents.

Snubbing Mulligan is therefore snubbing the U.S. belt.

We have no intention of insulting the U.S. championship. Over the years, we have reported its fortunes with scrupulous coverage. The man who owns the title must always be given special consideration when it comes to the ratings. We have not given Mulligan this consideration. This might be wrong.

Blackjack Mulligan is included in this month's ratings. Hopefully, it is the right move to make, The U.S. champion should be among the top 10 contenders, no matter what the circumstances. Further, Race's current success makes his past losses to other wrestlers seem less important.

"I want a public apology!" Mulligan screamed into the telephone receiver after being told he'd be rated this month. "I want the world to know you're sorry for insulting me. You people dragged me and my title through the mud. My name written down on some list doesn't make up for the months it wasn't there. So let's see you guys on your hands and knees apologizing.

"I want you guys to suffer. I want you guys to feel like I did. Do you

(Continued on page 54)

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SHOULD WE APOLOGIZE TO BLACKJACK MULLIGAN?

(Continued from Page 53)

have any idea what it's like to walk into a dressing room feeling like a king with the belt around your waist, only to have it all crumble when someone throws a rating page at you? Well, that happened to me too many times. So I want to see you guys crawl. I want a public apology!"

Our first reaction was to hang up on Mulligan. We don't take orders. But reflecting upon the situation, we began to wonder if Mulligan didn't have a point. He may have been the only unrated champion in history. Unintentionally, this magazine may have indeed insulted him.

If we have in any way dminished the U.S. championship, we apologize. That was never our intention. It is a title that has always been of the utmost importance to the wrestling scene. Its history is one of continued respect.

This does not mean we approve of Mulligan's tactics as champion. The man is a reprehensible rulebreaker with no shred of dignity. His cheating tactics are infamous throughout the sport. To pretend he has brought honor to the U.S. title would be the greatest disservice we could ever do to that honored belt.

If Mulligan really wants respect for his title, then he should start wrestling scientifically. This would do more to earn him dignity than all the rating pages in the world. And if a public apology is in order, it should be Mulligan apologizing to all the men he has maimed with his cheating tactics. Perhaps we were blinded to the title's importance by the current champion's evil ways. It's hard to honor a title Mulligan owns.

Blackjack Mulligan is now officially one of the top 10 contenders for the NWA title. It's only right and fair. However, it's strange to do something right and fair where Mulligan is concerned. We hope someone explains the meaning of the words to him. ☐

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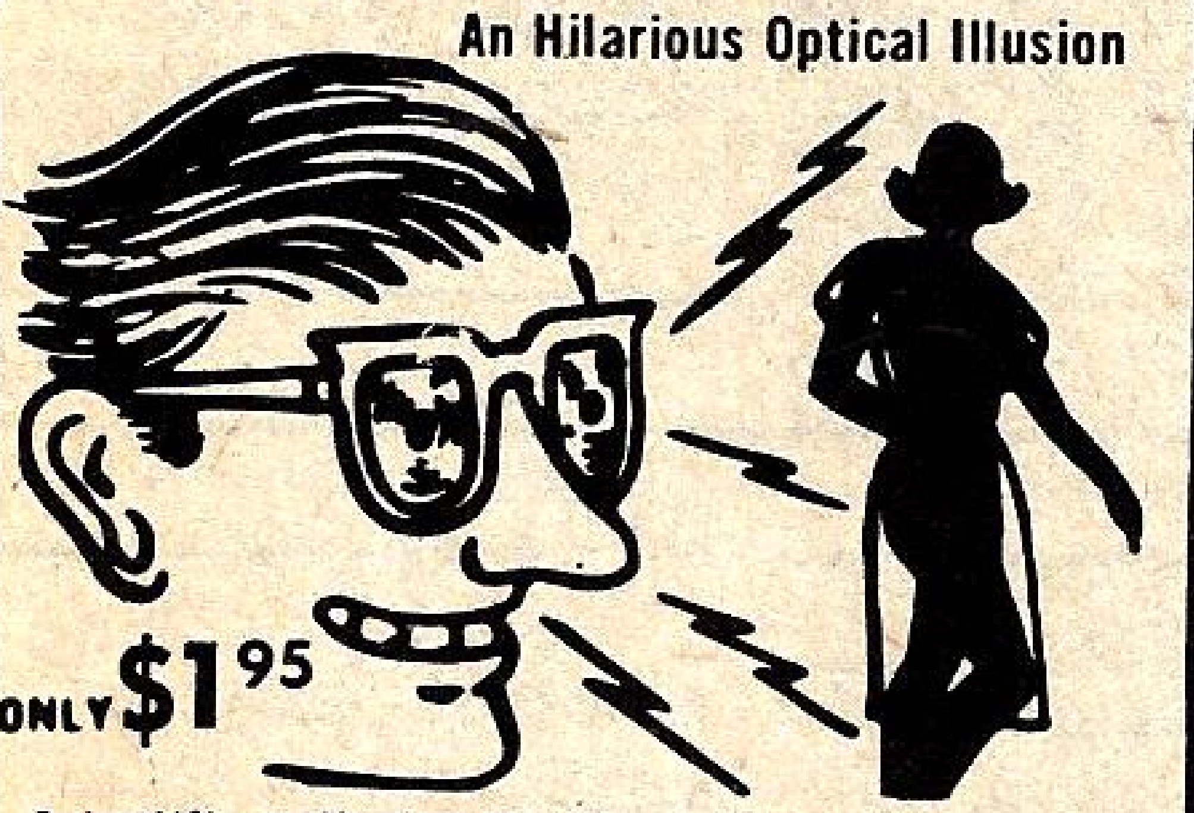
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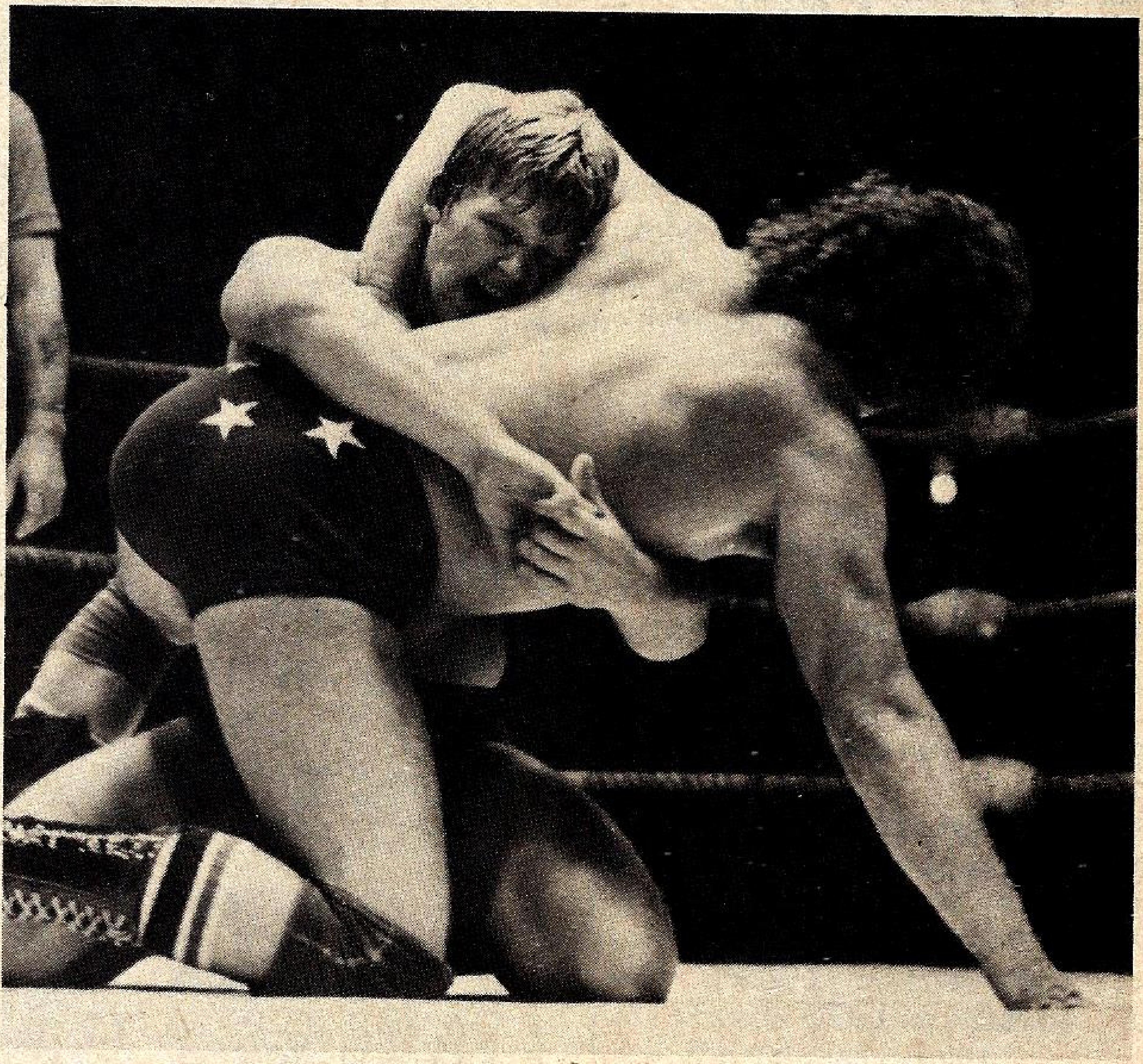
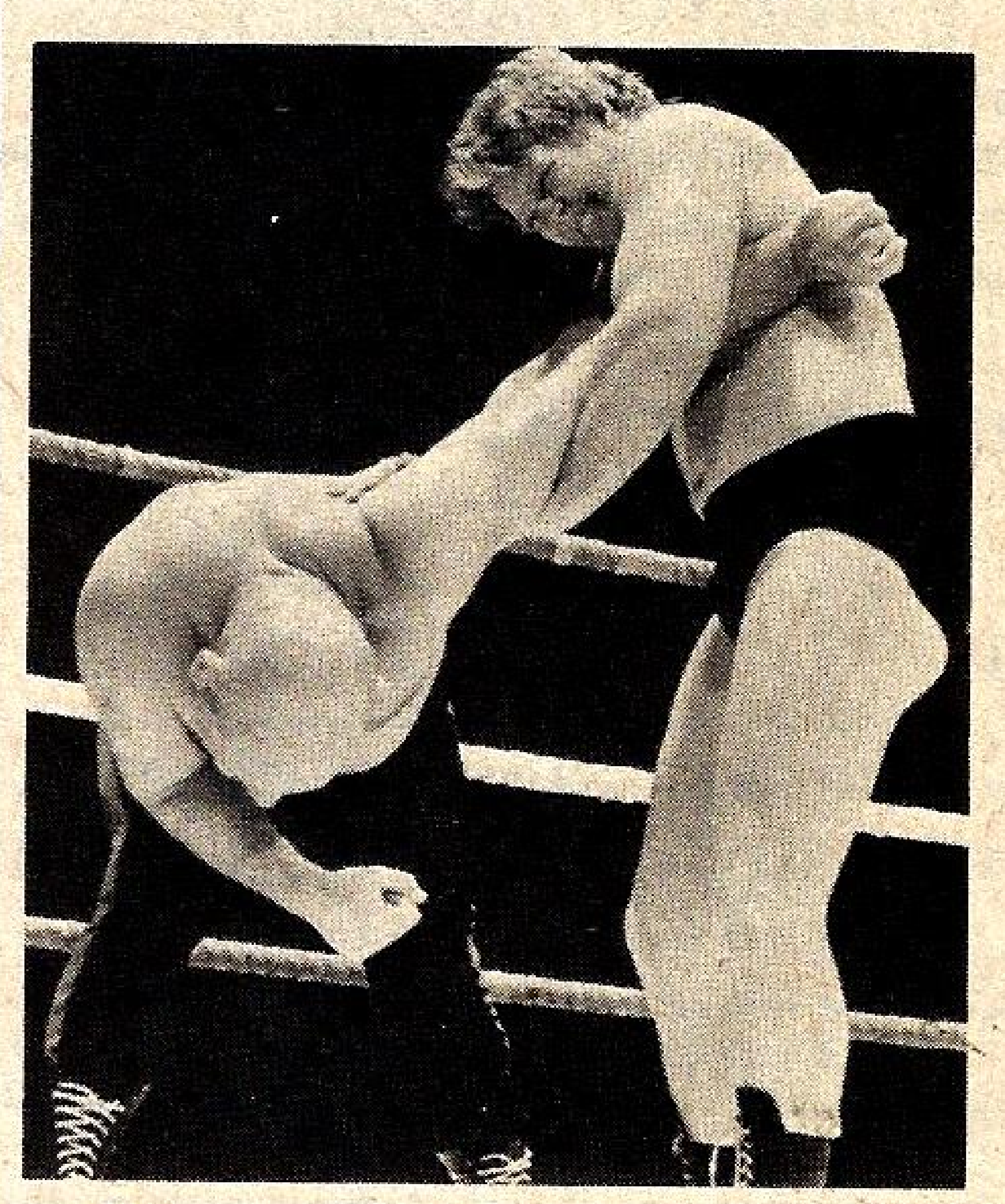
Bruno Predicts

(Continued from Page 35)





Not even Terry Funk (above) or Baron Von Raschke (below) have been able to defeat Backlund. The young man is the most sensational young star in the sport!

which only a golden few may gain entrance.

"I'm one of the happiest men on earth," Bruno proclaims, "there's almost nothing I haven't done that's within my power. Every morning I wake up and feel this is the best of all possible worlds. But for all the joy I have, it can't compare to what Backlund is feeling now. His every waking moment tingles with expectation.

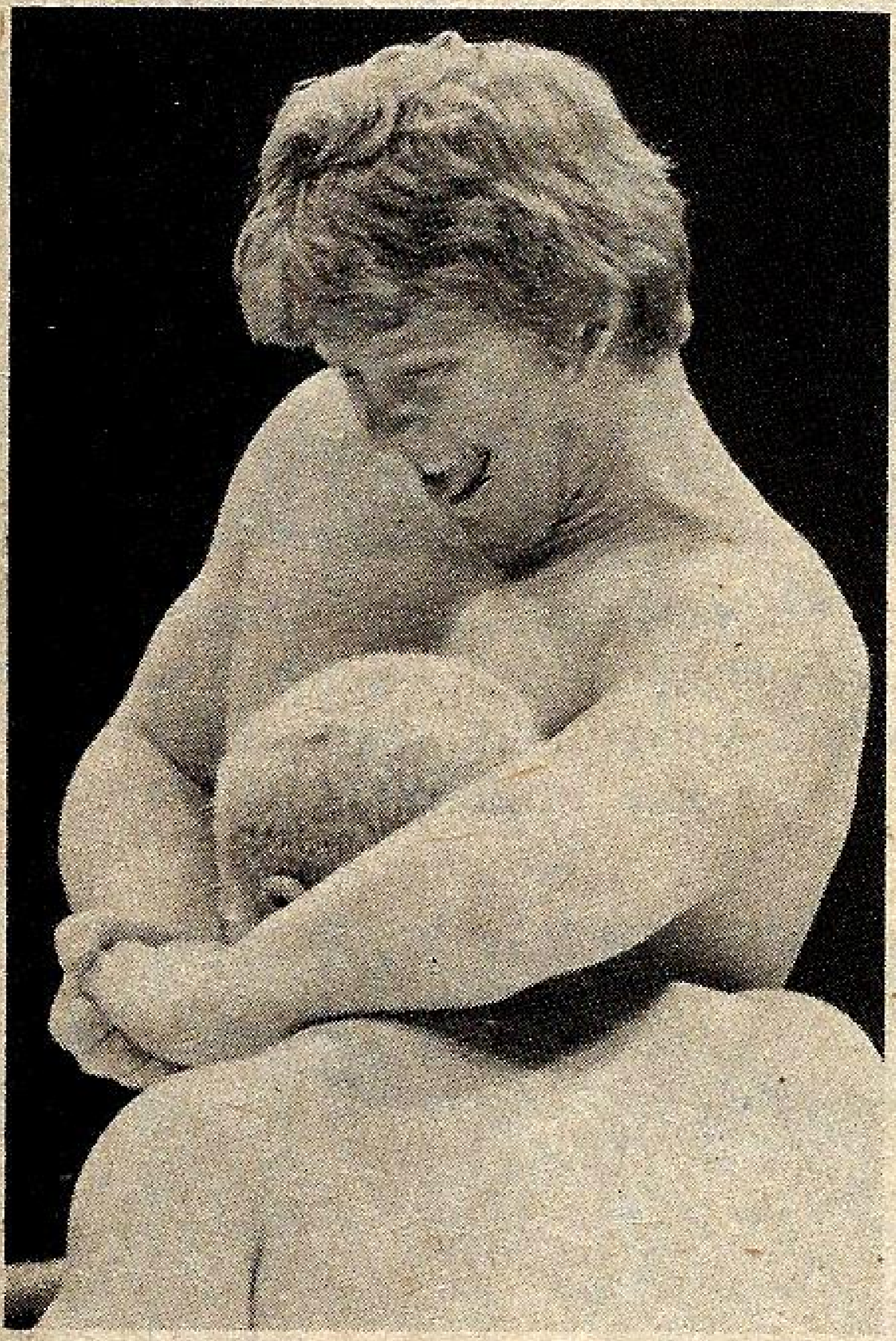
"Those who've never known it can't begin to understand. I wish I was a poet so the feeling could be described. But I'd trade every penny I have to feel that way again. Still, I've known it once, and that's more than most people will ever get.

"I know how Backlund feels when I watch him wrestle. There is total concentration on the match; every fiber of his being is electric. I get a thrill watching him, remembering how it felt for me.

"Backlund should make a good champion, but you can never tell about these things. I once thought a certain champion, who I'd better not name, would make the greatest champion ever. He didn't come close. In fact, most people thought he was a disgrace. I remember discussing the man with my friend, Pedro Morales, and Pedro noted, 'Once he became champ, he found out it wasn't what he wanted.' As Pedro knows—because he was a great champion—it takes a special kind of man to want the pressures and responsibilities of a championship. And you never know about that until the belt is around your waist.

"People ask me what advice I'd give Backlund. It's the same advice I give to everyone. Do what the fans want. They're always right. The crowd is the best guide any man can hope for."

Bruno takes a last swig of coffee and refills his cup. He leans back in his overstuffed leather chair and stares at the ceiling for a moment. When he breaks the silence, there's a wide smile on his face.



Bob first gained national attention by taking the Missouri state title from Harley Race in a sensational battle.

"If and when Backlund does become champion, I'd like to wrestle him for the title. It'll be interesting to see if I could beat him. It would be some scientific match. And the winner could really call himself champion of wrestling! Wouldn't that be something!"

At this point, Bruno's son comes in and asks him when the interview will be over. He wants to play catch with his father. Since the interview is over, anyway, Bruno rushes out to play with his son. Perhaps someday Bob Backlund will be giving an interview predicting Bruno's son will be the next champion. ☐

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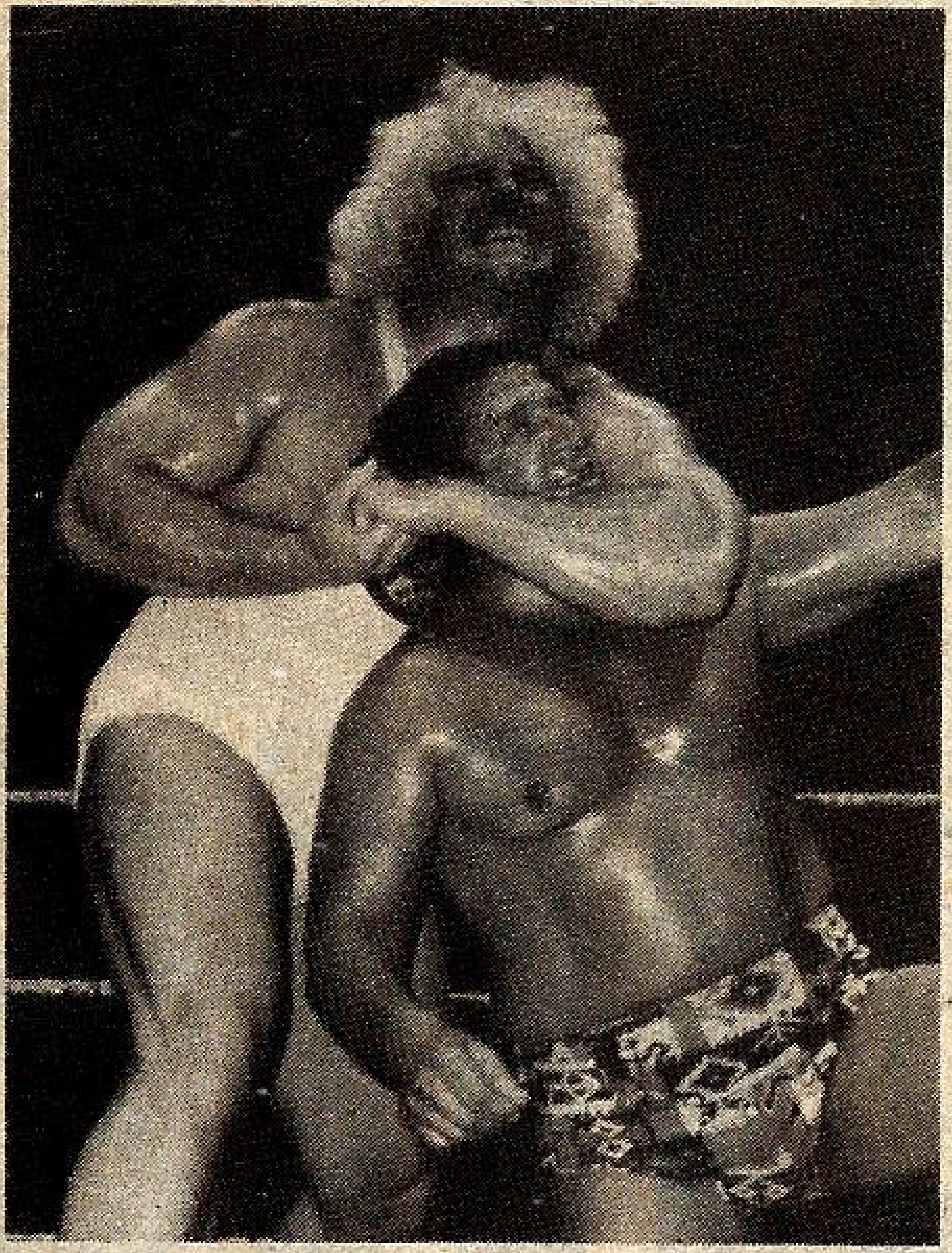
will be up to him to conquer whatever drives him to alienate tag team partners. The success of the team will be due to his making it a team in the true sense of the word. What are the chances of that?

Most experts believe Andre can become a great tag team partner if the team itself establishes its superiority. If Strongbow can complement Andre to the point where the giant can understand the joys of tag team wrestling, Andre will adapt to the sport's needs. Then the greatest tag team in wrestling history could be formed.



Ken Patera appears to have Strongbow in trouble, but it won't last for long. Jay will soon break the hold and tag Andre to step in for him.

So, Andre needs Strongbow and Jay needs Andre. The two men could make themselves into a historical combination, or one of the great noble failures in wrestling. It all depends on whether together they can make Andre into a tag team partner.

Reports from the gym say the two work together brilliantly. However, what happens in the gym means little. Andre has been awesome in training before. The true test will be in combat, when the blood pumps to his brain and excitement galvanizes his muscles. Will he fail his partner again? Or will the combination be so magnificent as to transform Andre into the tag team partner he has always promised to be?

Some flaw in Andre makes him forsake his tag team partner in combat. Hopefully, together, Andre and Strongbow can affect a cure. ☐

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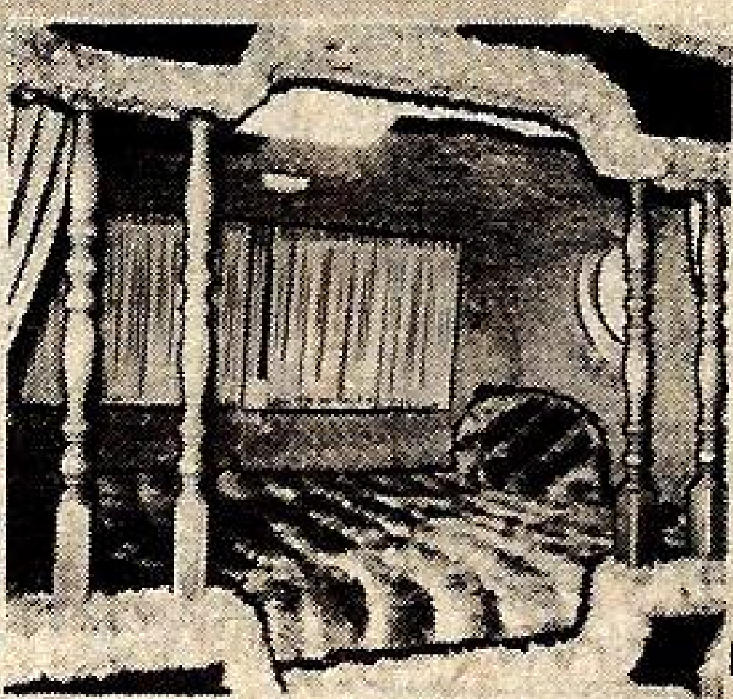

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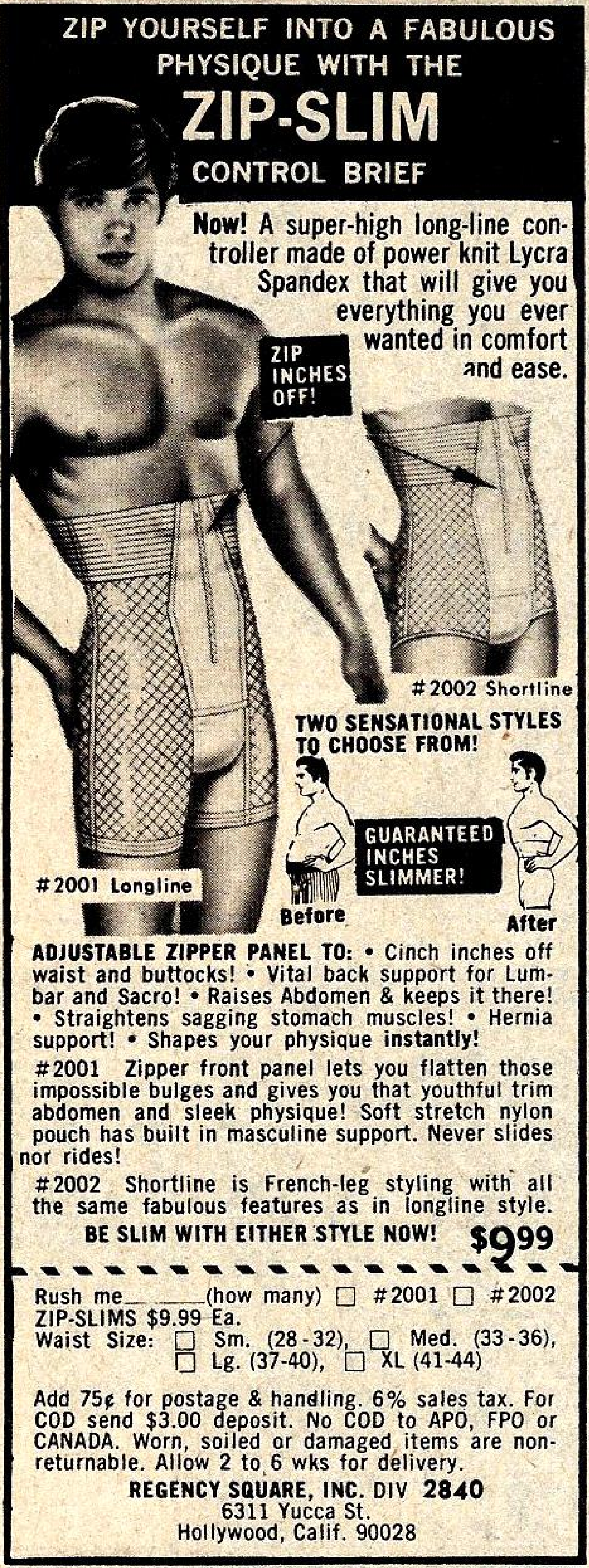

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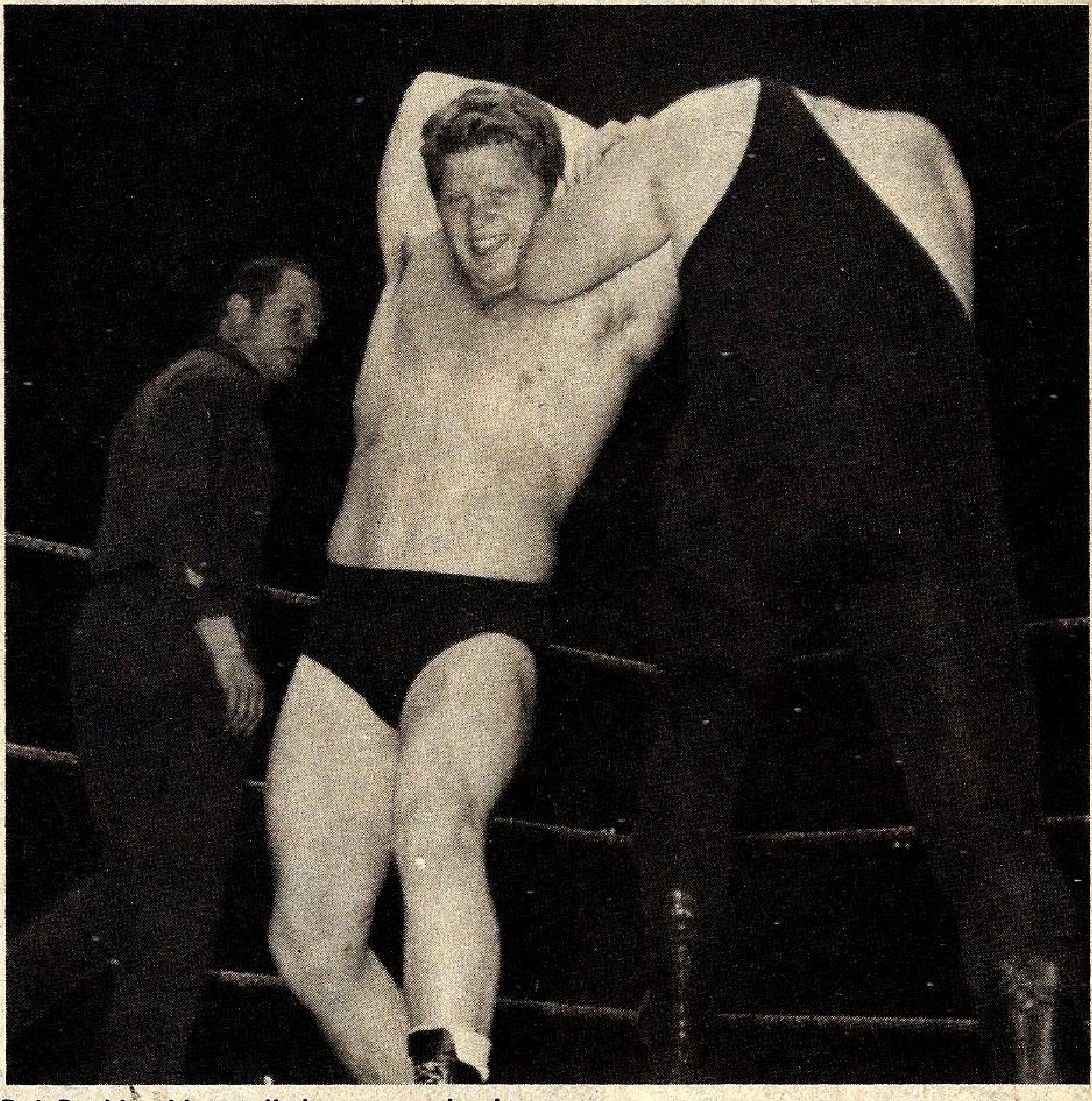
(Continued from Page 18)



Bob Backlund is totally in command as he engages in a test of strength against hated Executioner #2.

NO DOUBT

Can there be any doubt that Bob Backlund is destined to become one of the greatest wrestling superstars in history? After reading "I Hope I Can Fill Bruno's Shoes" (August 1977), I sure am convinced of this.

Bob Backlund has had an amazing career in a very short span of time. He has proven over and over again that he is talented. He should not have to worry about filling Bruno's shoes. He is a different kind of wrestler, and he does not have to compare himself to Sammartino.

In many ways, Bob Backlund is the best thing to ever happen to the sport of wrestling.

SAM KRUPSAK
Dayton, Ohio

DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT

I really like INSIDE WRESTLING, except for the column "Bodyslams and Pinfalls" written by Dan Shocket. And that I take strong exception to.

In the latest installment (August 1977) of this idiocy, Mr. Shocket has taken to defending the three vicious rulebreakers who now rule the three major associations. How vile can he get? Who would ever defend Superstar Graham, Harley Race, or Nick Bockwinkle? Only a man with a demented mind.

Dan Shocket has been on your staff for a few years now, and he used to write some excellent articles. But then he went crazy. And now I think it is time he was asked to leave your staff. His vicious and venimous writing should be censored!

SHEILA THAYER
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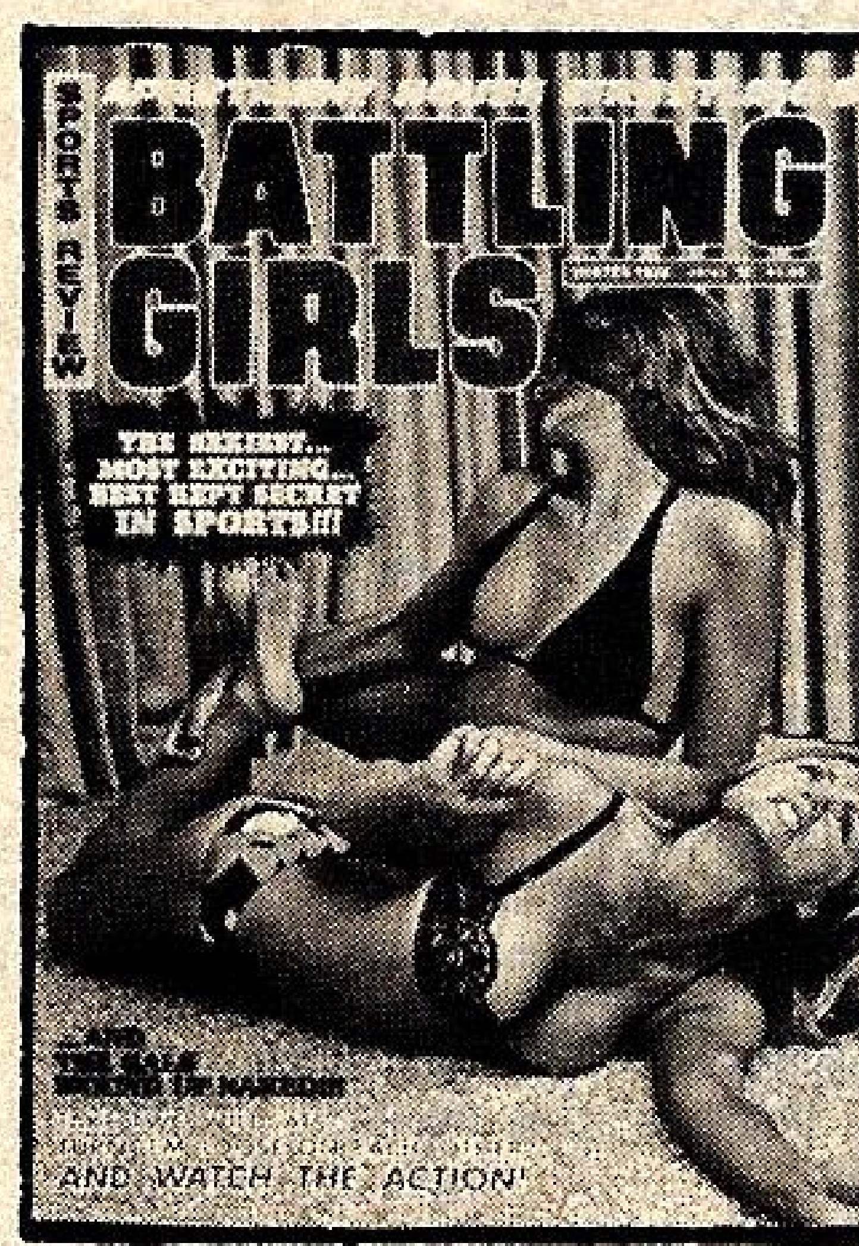
BATTLING GIRLS
SPORTS REVIEW
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AND WATCH THE ACTION

WINTER 1975

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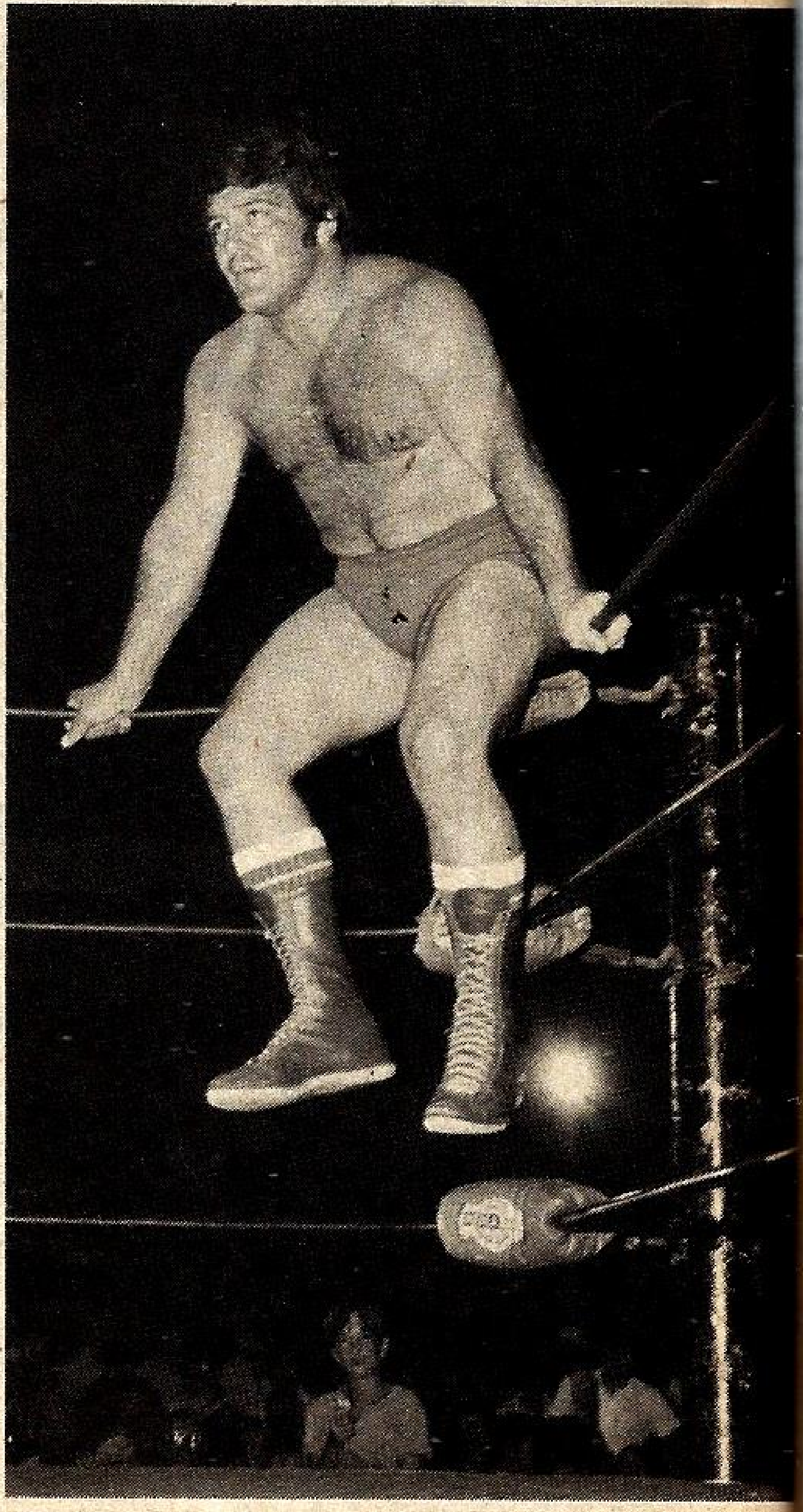
WRESTLING CAPITALS

(Continued from Page 22)

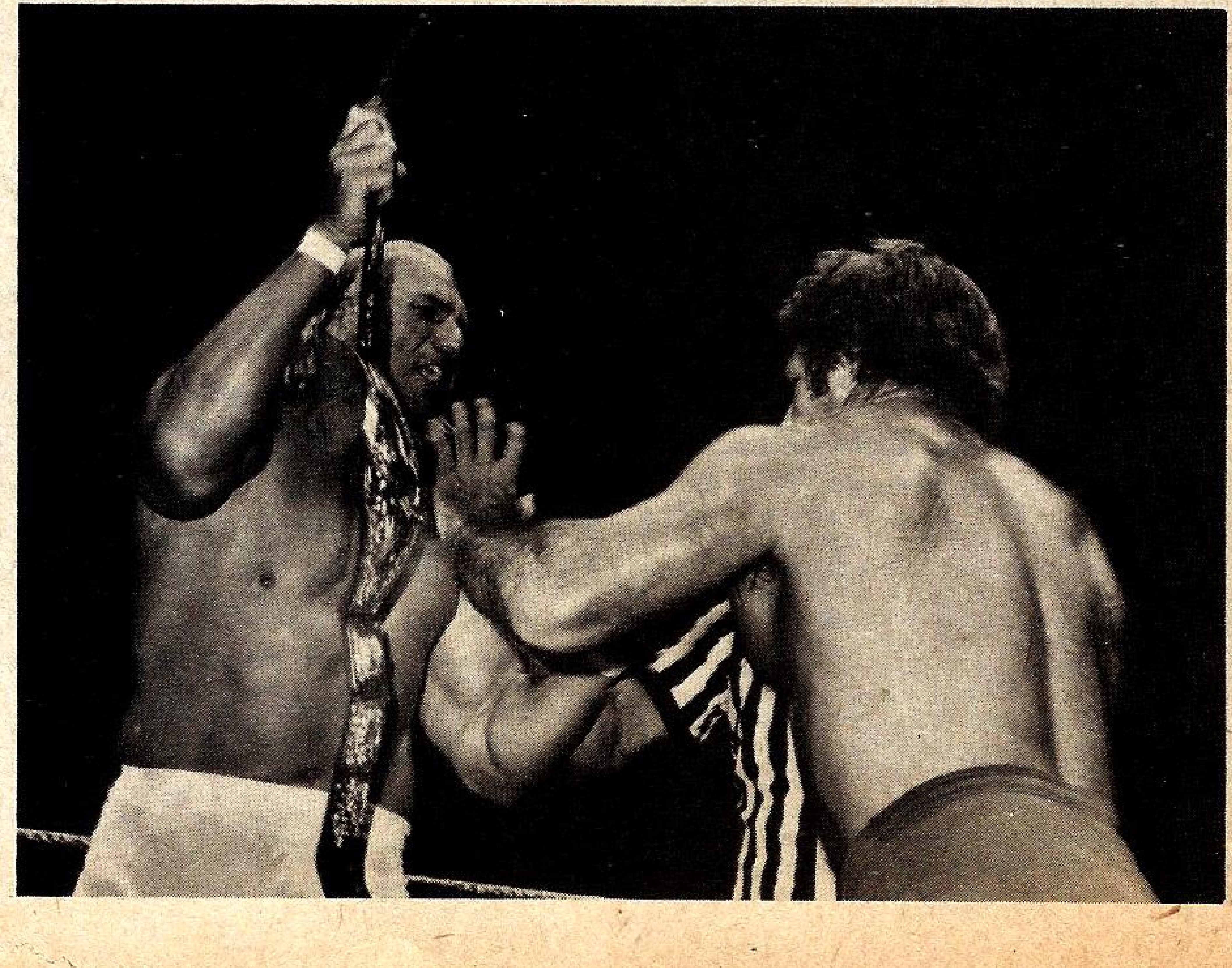
The end came when Slater couldn't answer the 10-count while outside the ring. Jones won, but he did not get the title since he did not pin Slater or make him submit.

Dusty Rhodes taught Waldo Von Erich a lesson, beating him in a Texas Bullrope match . . . Tony Atlas and The Sheik were both disqualified in their bloody brawl . . . Blackjack Mulligan barely got by Rocky Johnson . . . Mr. Wrestling I and II upset Pak Song and The French Angel.

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK—*Correspondent:* **Kevin Steinfeld**—Superstar Billy Graham barely escaped with his WWWF title as he took on former champion, Bruno Sammartino. The match started out with Bruno as the aggressor. Then Superstar retaliated and the match became Graham's. That was not too long lived for Graham, since Bruno again took charge. In desperation, Graham pushed Bruno into the referee. When the official got back in the action, both grapplers were fighting furiously. The referee tried to break up the illegal action, but both wrestlers shoved him out of



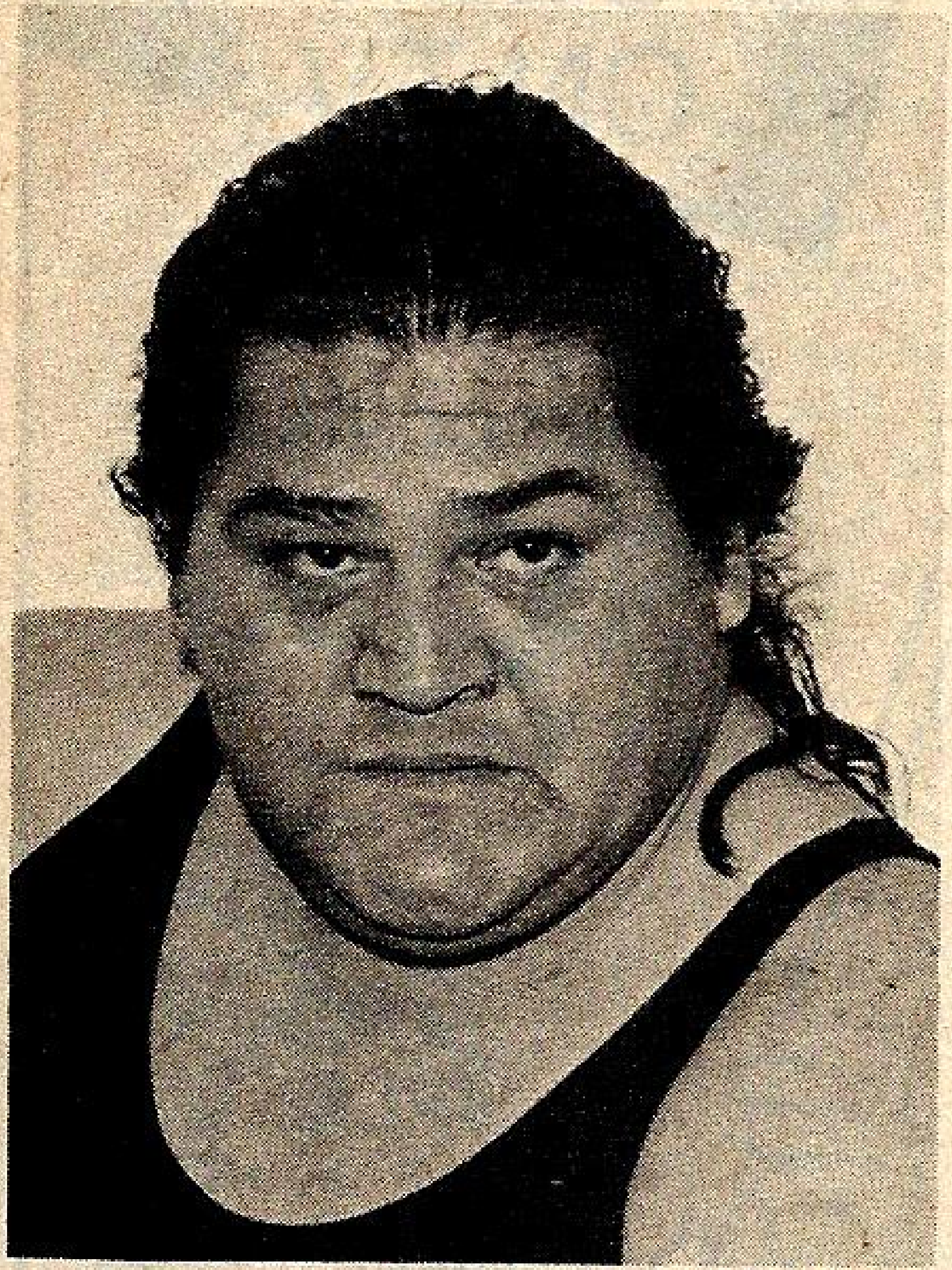
Paul Jones (above) awaits the sound of the bell to send him into combat against Dick Slater. Former WWWF champion Bruno Sammartino tries to take the title back from Superstar Graham (below).



the way. The match went totally out of control and finally both wrestlers were disqualified.

Andre the Giant and Chief Jay Strongbow downed Ken Patera and Nikoli Volkoff . . . Tony Garea won by disqualification over George Steele . . . Peter Maivia whipped Baron Scicluna.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—*Correspondent:* Dan Palantonio— An action-packed tag team bout saw Chavo Guerrero and Tommy Seigler take on the hated duo of Roddy Piper and Gorgeous Keith Franks. Piper and Franks had the edge because they doubleteamed, used elbow drops to weaken Guerrero. Finally Chavo tagged Tommy. Luckily, Piper was saved by the time limit bell—since Seigler was about to drag him from the ring and smash his head into the press table! Piper and Franks were furious even though the time limit saved them—because the referee rendered a decision and gave it to Chavo and Tommy!



Bull Ramos has returned to California after a long absence. He is a man to be feared as well as respected.

Bull Ramos returned and stopped Tom Jones (that's not unusual) . . . Alex Perez slammed Mike Adams . . . The Von Steigers brutalized Jerry Monti and Chris Colt. ☐

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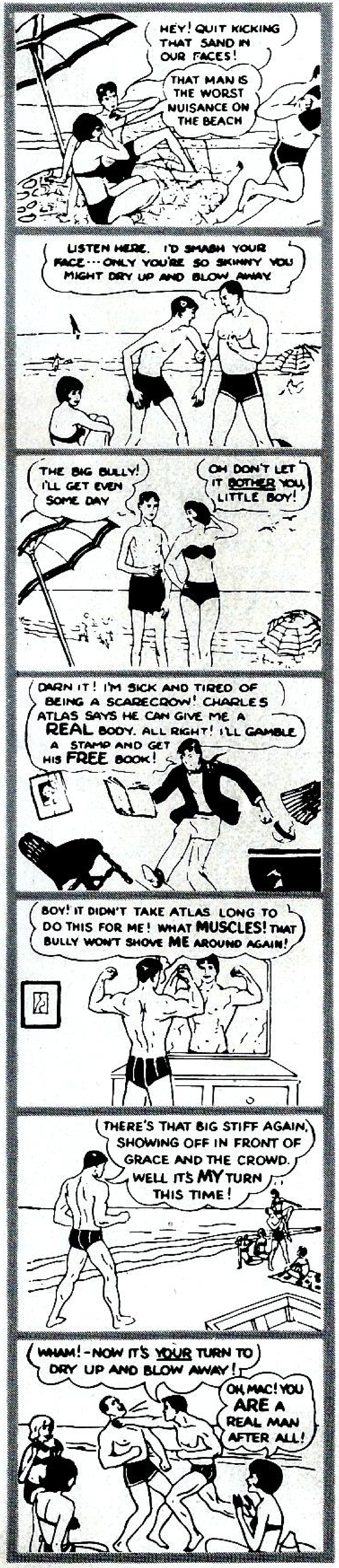
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